観過斯知仁矣。
―論語―

アフタヌーンKC

無限の住人

むげんのじゅうにん

30

沙村広明

講談社

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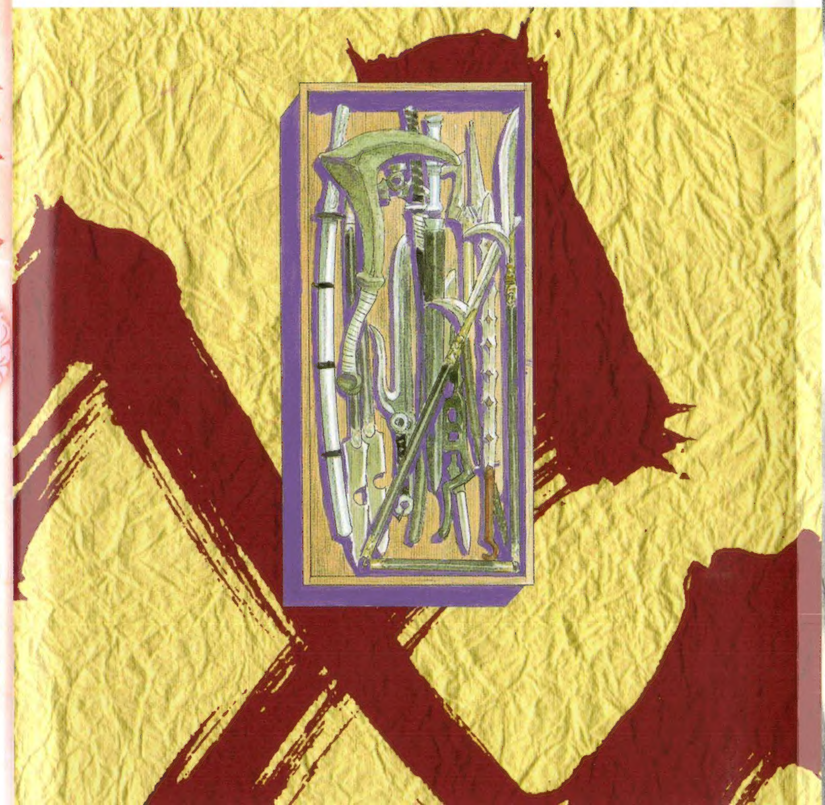

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何処へか去り
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ただ残すのみ

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30
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198TH CHAPTER
THE DANCE OF THE HUNDRED VIEWS (PART THE THIRD)

ORIGINALLY, I HAD NO NEED TO FEEL STRONGLY AT THEIR DEATHS.

THE SIX DEMONS', A GROUP FORMED ONLY OF CRIMINALS SENTENCED TO DEATH-

I VERY MUCH DO... I CAN'T HELP IT.

AND YET... AND YET, NOW

I WILL AVENGE THEM!

STRONGER PERSON... WHOEVER YOU ARE...

MITAKE.

TO SPEAK FRANKLY, I HAVE BEEN GAUGING THE ENEMY BY WATCHING HOW THEY FIGHT WITH YOU.

IT SEEMS YOU HELD OUT WELL.

...YOUR LEG... WHAT HAPPE-NED?

I DON'T KNOW IF IT WILL HOLD OUT FOR A SINGLE STRIKE.

TO TELL THE TRUTH... I'M FAR FROM BEING IN FIGHTING CONDITION.

ARE... ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

EVEN IF I'M WILLING TO COMPLETELY SMASH MY LEFT LEG...

I'M NOT CONCEITED ENOUGH TO LET THE WORD 'ALRIGHT' PASS MY LIPS WITH THIS WOMAN AS MY OPPONENT.

EVEN IF I WAS IN PERFECT CONDITION.

HA.

HA.

HA.

YOU ARE A PROUD SWORDSMAN.

GIICHI.

FOR THIS MAN TO SAY SUCH A THING...

THAT WOMAN'S BREATH ...

WILL RUN OUT WITHIN A FEW MOMENTS.

SO... WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY IS JUST ME TALKING TO MYSELF.

JUST TALKING TO MY-SELF...

NO... SORRY...

DID YOU SEE THE SCENE WHEN THE HUNDRED-MAN-SLAYER FIRST SHOWED HIMSELF HERE?

HE CALLED THAT SOMETHING AN 'ASAEMON PILL'.

HE ALSO SAID THAT HE GOT IT EXTREMELY CHEAP...

A WHILE AGO, WHEN THAT WOMAN COLLAPSED AND STARTED COUGHING UP BLOOD, THE HUNDRED-MAN-SLAYER PUT SOMETHING INTO HER MOUTH ALONG WITH WATER FROM A BAMBOO FLASK.

THE REMAINING CORPSES WERE CREMATED OR BURIED

ALL THE MATERIALS USED WERE INCINERATED. THE PRISON WAS DEMOLISHED.

HE USED HIS PRIVATE FUNDS TO CONDUCT A CLEANUP OF THE ABOMINABLE 'IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS'

BEFORE LORD HABAKI CAME INTO POSSESSION OF ANTOJI.

BUT THE TRACES OF OBJECTS CAN BE MADE TO VANISH COMPLETELY!

THE VOICE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE'S DISTRUST AND RESENTMENT OF THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT PROBABLY WON'T VANISH FOR A WHILE YET.

BUT YOU CAN'T STOP PEOPLE TALKING.

THE MEDICINE CURRENTLY BEING SOLD AS 'ASAEMON PILLS'

ARE ALL FAKES!

KNEADED BORNEOL AND CLOVES TO SELL AS A SUBSTITUTE MEDICINE TO USE AS AN EMERGENCY STOPGAP MEASURE.

I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT THE YAMADA FAMILY, WHO WERE ABLE TO ENTIRELY EXTRACT PEOPLE'S LIVERS AND GALL BLADDERS AS NECESSARY INGREDIENTS FOR THE 'ASAEMON PILL',...

AND THAT JOB..

EVEN INFLUENCED THE FAMILY TRADE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS STEWARD, YAMADA ASAEMON.

HA

NOT TO MENTION, FOR THOSE WHO KEEP MOVING... IT DOESN'T EVEN LAST HALF AN HOUR!

HA

HA

ALTHOUGH THEY CAN TEMPORARILY SUPPRESS PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS,

IF YOU WAIT AND REST, IT ONLY TAKES THEM ABOUT AN HOUR TO REVEAL THEIR TRUE NATURE.

UGH ...

ZY ...

HA ...

A...

KA HA ..

HOWEVER...

I COULDN'T EVEN KEEP FIGHTING FOR THAT HALF HOUR.

KNOWING THAT... EVEN THOUGH IT'S COWARDLY,

IF IT WERE SOMEONE STRONGER.. I'M SURE...!

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

THAT BANQUET WHICH BECAME THE SPARK FOR THE COLLAPSE OF THE ITTOU-RYUU.

...MITAKE.

IF I FALL HERE, THIS WILL BE A SCENE YOU WON'T SURVIVE.

THE FILTH OF KILLING. THE TRUE NATURE OF THE MUGAI SCHOOL.

THERE WAS NO PRIDE OR ANYTHING ELSE.

YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST TOLD ME 'WIN, WITHOUT QUESTIONING THE MEANS'.

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE BOTHERED WITH SUCH FOUL SPEECH...

AH

HA...

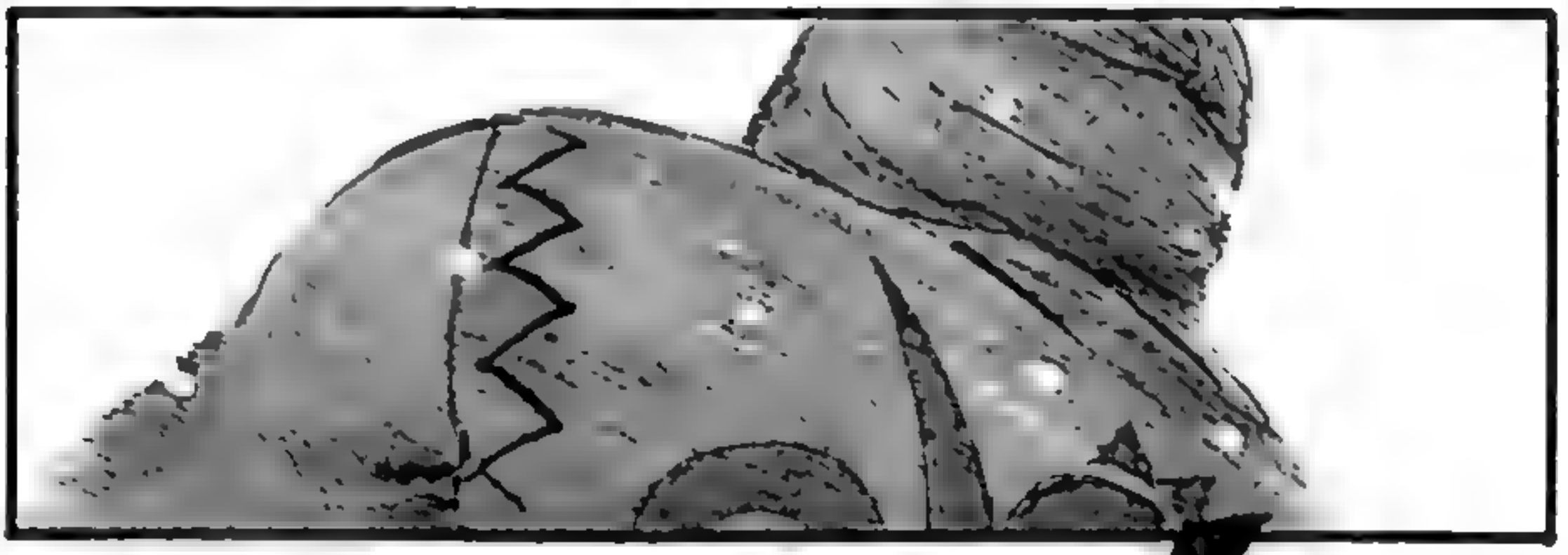
GIICHI...

HA

HA

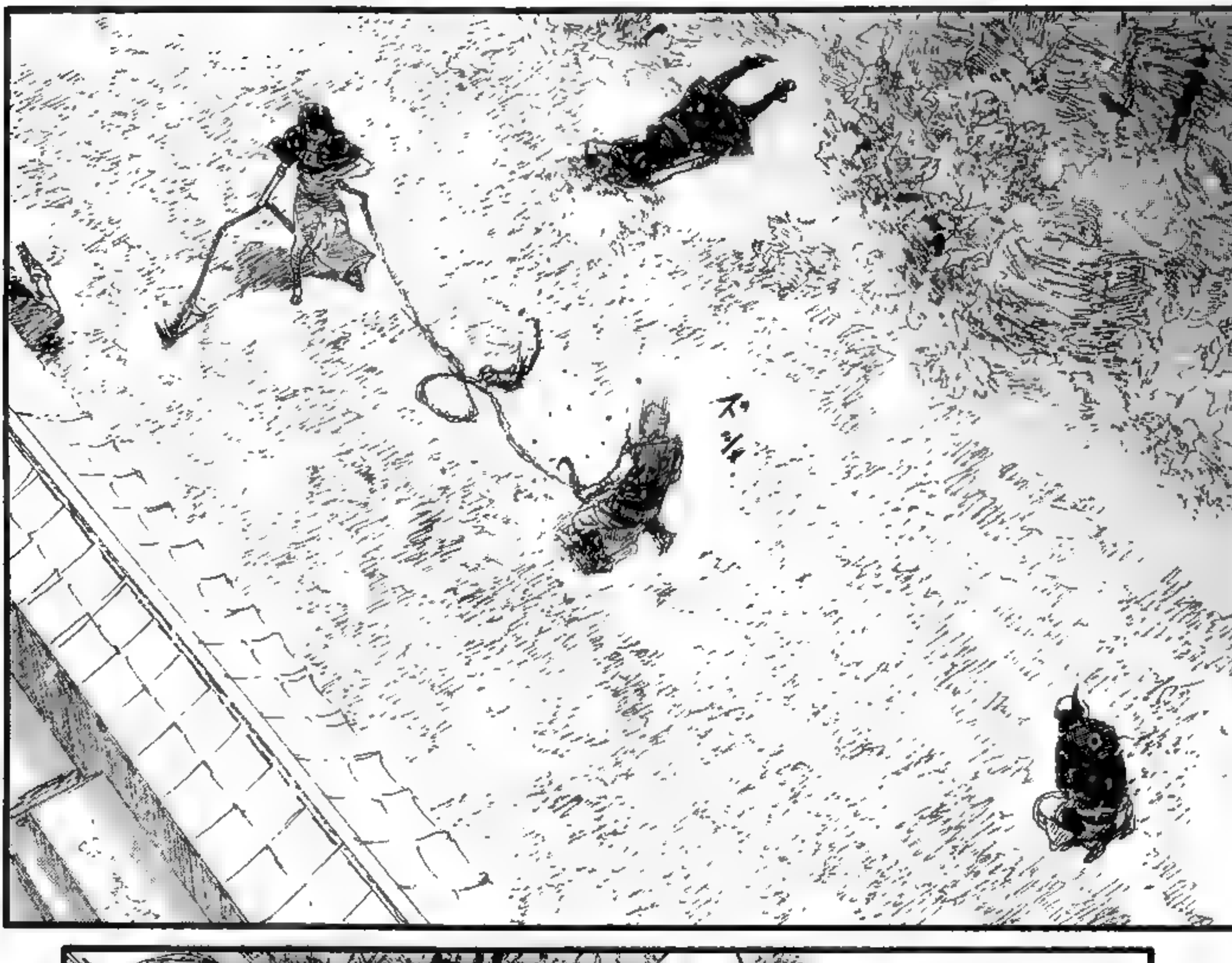
HA

HA
HURRY ...
HA
HA
HA
.....
H...
CA...



HMPH!

KUH...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GHH...!

!?

IT CAN'T BE... HOW?!

HER BREATHING IS SO BAD THAT SHE'S COUGHING UP BLOOD, BUT...

THIS CAN'T BE REAL...!

PTOO!

YOU! LOOKED STRONG, SO I MADE A SHOW OF COUGHING UP BLOOD.

THAT CAN'T BE!

IM-POSSIBLE... THAT'S...

'A SHOW'...? IT WAS AN ACT!?

THAT YOU CAN FIGHT LIKE THAT FROM ONE FAKE PILL!?

HOW... SUCH A THING IS..?

ARE YOU TELLING ME...

WHAT IS THIS... HOW!?

TH.. THAT COLOR...

BY A FAKE PILL, DO YOU MEAN THIS?

HOW CAN THAT THING HERE!? THEY SHOULD ALL HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF.

YOU... HOW DID YOU GET THE REAL THING!?

DURING THE BIRD DAY FAIR...

IT WAS GIVEN BY ANOTSU KAGEHISA, THE LEADER OF THE ITTOU-RYUU.

NO... BUT...

CERTAINLY... IF IT WERE FROM THEN...

THE... THE BIRD DAY FAIR? NOVEMBER...

COULD I CLING TO MY LIFE...

EVEN TO THE POINT OF EATING HUMAN LIVERS...?

ABOUT MY WAY OF BEING...

I WAS HESITATING A LONG TIME...

IF YOU WERE ILL WITH PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS,

WHY WAIT UNTIL TODAY TO TAKE THE MEDICINE?

IT'S ALL THE SAME.

EATING ONE. EATING TWO.

AFTER SIR MANJI EMBARRASSED ME...

BUT THEN...

BUT... EVEN WITHOUT MR. MANJI'S KISS,

IT PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME...

.....

HA

HA

WAS IT BACK THEN...?

AH?!

BUT WHERE ON EARTH...

WHEN I LOOK AT KAGEHISA, ALL ALONE... I AM UPLIFTED.

THE ITTOURYUU IS DESTROYED.

EVEN OUR FEW REMAINING COMRADES HAVE FALLEN.

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I WAS BORN...

I REALLY WANT TO LIVE!

第百九十八幕 終劇

IN ALL MY LIFE, I'VE NEVER WANTED TO LIVE SO MUCH!

THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWELFTH CHAPTER: THE GLORIOUS DEATH OF A WINTER THUNDERSTORM

BY SUCH A MEANS AS THIS?

THAT I, WHO ONCE HUNTED THE ITTOU-RYUU AS A PRACTITIONER OF THE MUGAI SCHOOL, WHICH SPECIALIZES IN SURPRISE ATTACKS,...

I SEE ...

A WHOLE-HEARTED DECEPTION, EH?

IT'S LITERALLY 'CUTTING ONE'S OWN FLESH TO BREAK THE ENEMIES BONES'.

HAD CALMED DOWN AFTER TAKING A SECOND ASAEMON PILL,

PERHAPS, IF MY BREA-THING

EVEN THAT RAGGED BREAT-HING!

SO IT WAS ALL AN ACT...

BUT, IF I WERE BREATHING RAGGEDLY,

AND SUCCEEDED IN JOINING HABAKI KAGIMURA.

YOU MIGHT HAVE GIVEN UP ON DEFEATING ME...

IT WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE CONVINCED OF THAT, THAT YOU'VE LINGERED HERE UNTIL NOW, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

THAT WOULD MEAN THAT I ONLY SWALLOWED THE FALSE MEDICINE, NO?

WAS TO STOP YOU HERE. IT WAS SOMETHING WHICH NEEDED TO BE DONE AT ANY COST.

IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE, THIS WOMAN WILL COME TO AN END.

HER HOPE,

FORGIVE ME, GIICHI...

I GOT YOU CAUGHT UP... IN SOMETHING COMPLETELY UNECCESARY...!

NO.. IT'S FINE...

NOW...

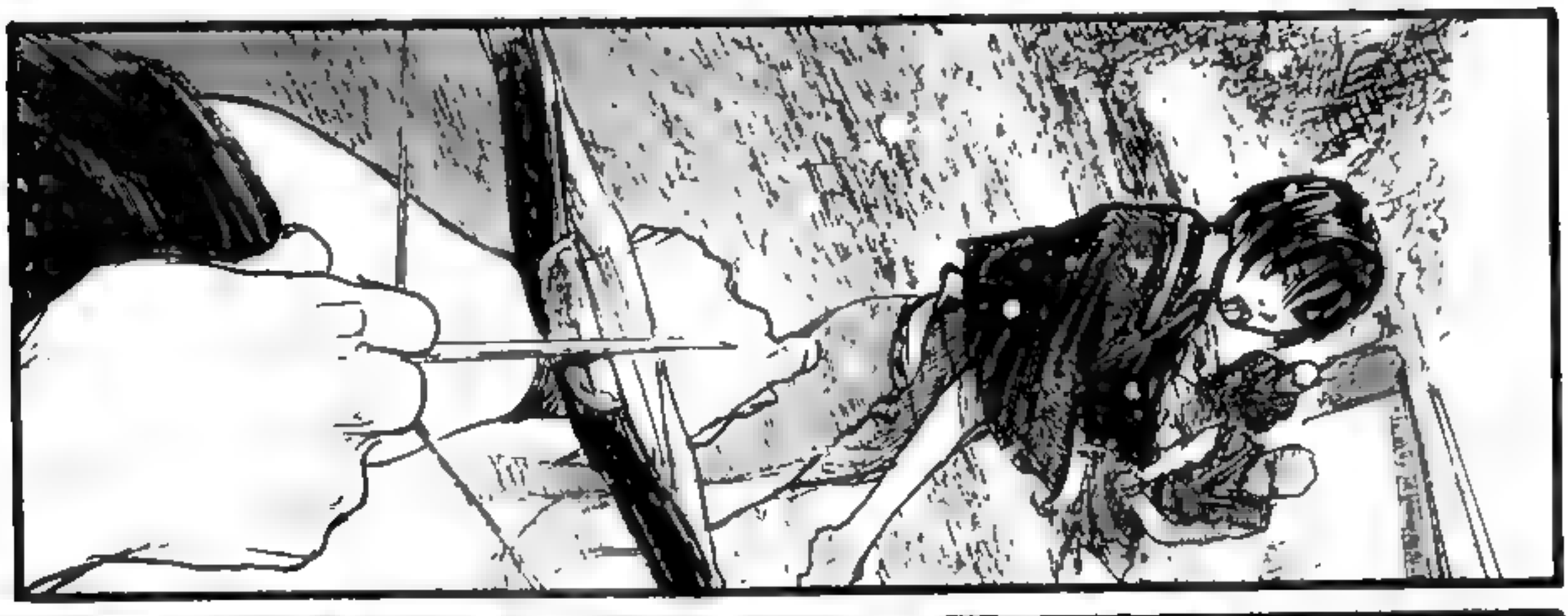
WE WILL BE PARTING SHORTLY...

?

!

OW, OW, OW!

AH!



YOU WERE ALREADY WOUNDED TO BEGIN WITH, WEREN'T YOU!?
THE WOUNDED OUGHT TO FALL BACK!
HYAKURIN! A GUN WOULD BE ONE THING, BUT THIS ISN'T A WOMAN YOU CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT WITH A BOW.
JUDGE THE ENEMY'S STRENGTH BY OUR CONDITION!

!?

IS YOUR ARROW ONE WHICH HAS NEVER MISSED EVEN ONCE BEFORE?

IF IT IS AN ARROW WHICH HAS NEVER ONCE MISSED OR BEEN DODGED OR BEEN KNOCKED ASIDE,

BUT,

THEN BY ALL MEANS, FIRE...

....TAKING ME LIGHTLY ....

IF THAT IS NOT THE CASE,

HYA-KURIN.

THEN IT IS CERTAINLY AN ARROW WHICH I CAN AVOID.

AFTER ALL,

I HAVE NO INTENT TO TELL YOU HOW TO FIGHT OR HOW TO DIE.

BOTH YOU AND I ARE FOLLOWERS OF THE MUGAI SCHOOL, WHO LEAVE NO CORPSES BEHIND

YOU PROMISED I WOULD BE THE ONE TO RAISE IT!

THE CHILD IN YOUR BELLY IS NOT OF THE MUGAI-RYU!

...FUH.

DON'T DRAG THE CHILD INTO THIS!

IF THAT'S HOW YOU REALLY FEEL, THEN...!

YOU'VE STUCK THAT BALD HEAD OF YOURS INTO MORE FIRST-CLASS BATTLES THAN I CAN COUNT!

DON'T SCREW WITH ME, BALDY!

WOMAN!

THIS BLOND HERE...

IS THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF OUR GROUP.

SHE ACTS LIKE SHE'S A GOOD FIGHTER...

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO REAL ABILITY SHE COULDN'T EVEN DREAM OF TOUCHING YOUR SHADOW.

WHA-

EVEN IF WE STOOD ON OUR HEADS WE'RE IN NO SHAPE TO UPSET THE STATE OF THIS BATTLE.

AND JUST AS YOU CAN SEE...

AND MORE-OVER

IN OTHER WORDS...

THERE IS NOONE HERE WHO CAN HALT YOUR PROGRESS ..

I BEG OF YOU. .

PLEASE JUST LEAVE US LIKE THIS.

GH!

THIS IS HOW IT IS.

I BEG OF YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU, WHO HAS SLAIN SO MANY OF THE ITTO-RYU, NOW BEG FOR YOUR LIFE?

.....

...SUCH AN ARBITRARY MAN.

AND THE SAKE OF THIS STRONG ONE...

FOR YOUR SAKE,

A WOMAN WITH CHILD, SHOULDN'T BE LEAPING DOWN CLIFFS.

IT WAS UNREASON-ABLE FOR ME TO SPEAK OF THE LIVES OF OTHER ITTO-RYU.

...FROM THE START,

THEN, WITH THAT, I...

IF YOU CEASE TO BE A THREAT TO KAGEHISA,

THERE ARE NONE CLOSE TO ME ASIDE FROM ANOTSU KAGEHISA AND DOCTORS OF MEDICINE.

WELL,

I GUESS I'LL BE GOING...

GIICHI...

THAT WOMAN WON'T INTERFERE IN ANOTSU'S BATTLE.

BESIDES... IF SHE BELIEVES IN THE CREED OF THE ITTO-RYU,

NOW THAT IT'S COME TO THIS, ALL WE CAN DO IS PRAY THAT LORD HABAKI BEATS ANOTSU IN A ONE-ON-ONE FIGHT...

SORRY, MITAKE, I WENT AND DECIDED THINGS ON MY OWN.

I HAVE NO RIGHT TO CRITI-CIZE YOUR JUDG-MENT.

I... TOSSED THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE AT YOU...

I EVEN TOLD YOU BEFORE NOT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE CLOSE FIGHTING.

GIICHI.

HYAKURIN.

YOU PROBABLY MEAN TO EXPRESS YOUR WORRIES ABOUT MY CONDITION.

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU LOST THE BABY DUE TO THAT STUNT?

THAT WOMAN WAS CORRECT.

I'VE BEEN ANGRY ABOUT THAT ALL THE WAY FROM EDO, SO TRY TO BE A LITTLE SELF-AWARE.

BY COMING HERE ON YOUR OWN, UNASKED BY ANYBODY...

YOU'VE HALF-ABANDONED THE CHILD IN MY BELLY.

VERY WELL.

I AM SORRY.

HOW FAR DID I FALL? I...

THIS IS BAD...

KH...

.....HH...

THEN THIS IS MY CHANCE!

MEANS THAT ANOTSU KAGEHISA IS STILL...

BUT, BEING ALIVE LIKE THIS...

ANOTSU'S BODY

MY SWORD?

GHHH UGGGH

I'LL MAKE THE FIRST MOVE

FATHER!

HE IS ALREADY AWAKE!

ANOTSU KAGEHISA IS IN FRONT OF YOU

REMEMBER HIS PRESENCE

HIS BREATHING!

IN FRONT OF YOU!

RYO!

I WOULD NOT TROUBLE MYSELF TO FINISH AN INVALID LIKE YOU!

WOMAN,

IN NORMAL TIMES...

IS AN ENEMY I CANNOT ALLOW TO EXIST IN THIS WORLD!

YOUR FATHER,

THE MAN BEHIND YOU,

BUT RIGHT NOW, I AM AL-MOST AT MY LIMIT AS WELL.

AND,

DO YOU WISH FOR THE BLOOD OF PARENT AND CHILD TO MINGLE TOGETHER IN A SINGLE STAIN ON THE SNOW?

STAND ASIDE!

THIS IS THE OUTCOME OF A DUEL. CAN YOU NOT TELL BY LOOKING?

WHAT CHILDISH PRATTLE.

JUST TRY IT!

SPEAKING LIKE THAT WITH MY FATHER BLIND IN FRONT OF YOU!!

YOU MAY PREACH PURE SPORTSMANSHIP WITHOUT RELYING ON NUMBERS, BUT DEEP DOWN THIS IS WHAT YOU REALLY ARE!

YES, I KNOW THAT.

TAKING MY FATHER'S EYE IS YOUR HONOR...

BUT, AT THE LEAST ....

HIS LEFT EYE WASN'T YOUR WORK!

HACK

THEN... YOU'LL BE EVEN!

NOW..I'LL... CRUSH... YOUR... LEFT EYE...

I'LL

COU-GH!

FAT-HER!

F...

GUH !!

AGAA ...

AAH..

THAT'S WHY IT'S GONE SO FAR...

THIS DAMN MOUN-TAIN...

AAH.. AAAAA AAAH!

MY APOLOGIES. MY DAUGHTER PUT A DAMPER ON THINGS.

ON THE CONTRARY, MY ONLY WORRY,

WAS FOR THE KARMA I MIGHT INCUR BY SLAYING A PARENT IN FRONT OF HIS OWN DAUGHTER.

NO.

YOU ARE SAYING I AM THE ONE WHO WILL BE BUTCHERED!

IT'S ALMOST AS IF...

HEHEHE... HAHA HAH!

I BEG OF YOU, FATHER!

RYO...

PLEASE STAND ASIDE! I... I'VE...

EVEN WHILE WE TALK, THIS MAN IS ONLY LOOKING FOR HIS CHANCE TO MAKE YOU HIS PREY! TO KILL YOU, FATHER!

I'VE EVEN TRUSTED THEM AS ENEMIES BEFORE, BUT THAT WAS ALL AN ILLUSION!

CROSSED BLADES WITH MANY OF THE ITTO-RYU BEFORE... LISTENED TO THEIR WORDS!

SHUT UP! DON'T BE FOOLED! DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU!

YOU CAN SMELL THE GUN POWDER!

THEY ARE SWORN NOT TO FIRE UNLESS THE SHIPS FIRST COME UNDER ATTACK.

IF YOU'RE SPEAKING OF THE ARCHERS ON THE SHIPS,

.....?

I'M BEGGING YOU, SO...

FATHER, LISTEN!

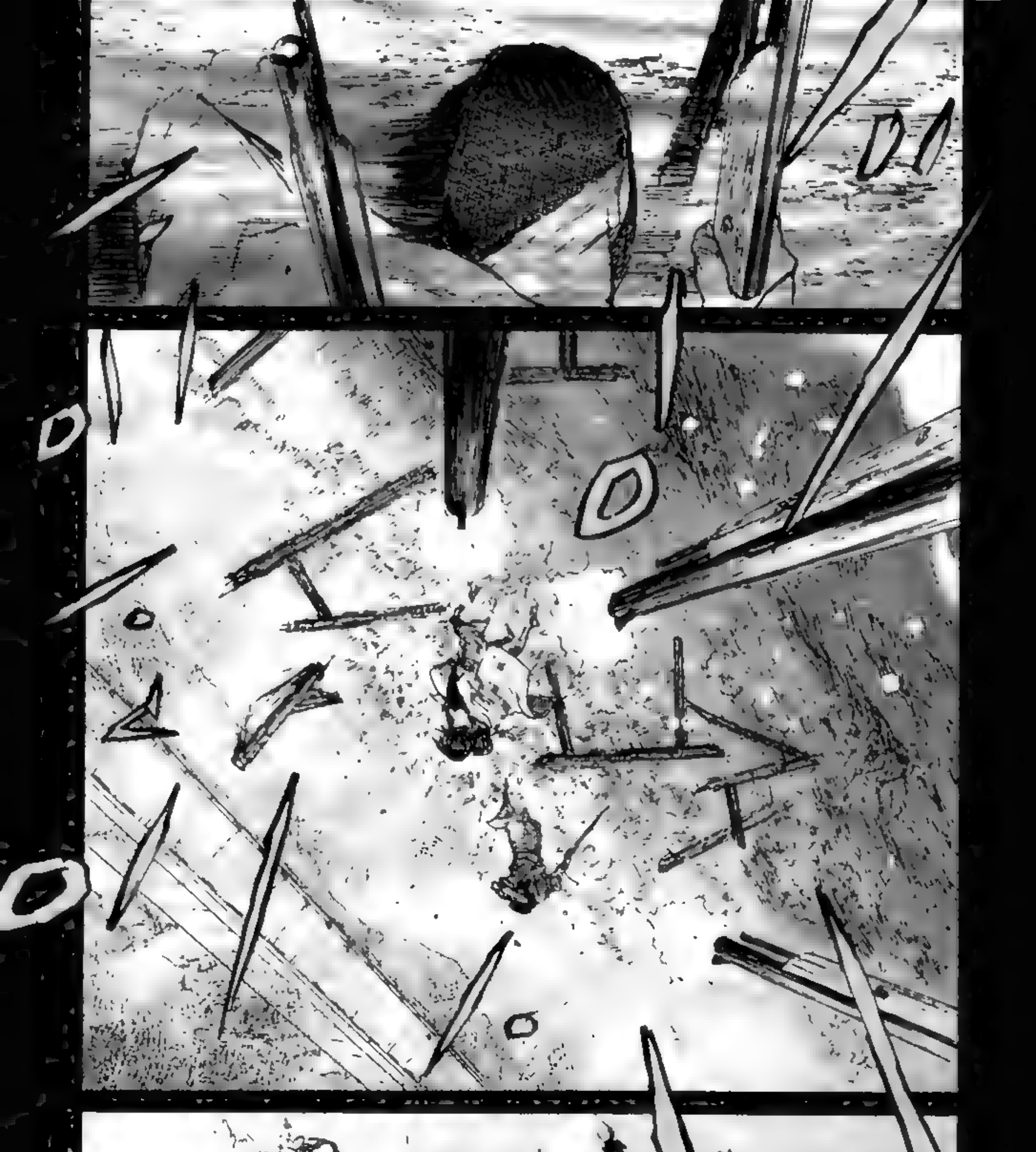
PLEASE!

KAGE-HISA.

第百九十九幕 終劇

200TH CHAPTER

GLORIOUS DEATH IN A WINTER THUNDERSTORM (PART THE SECOND)



TCH!

GUH!

SUCH POWER!

LET'S GO, RYO!

!

....GUNS?

ナイフ

MAKIE!

GUH!

AH

HH

TCH!

.....

THEY'RE OVER IN THE SHADOWS BY THE CLIFF

NO GOOD'

AFTER FIRING THAT MANY SHOTS...!?

A... ARE YOU SAYING YOU FAILED...? FAILED TO KILL ANOTSU KAGEHISA...

WE CAN'T DO THAT, HABAKI-SAN

FIRE!

EVEN IF IT'S ONLY HIM, BE SURE TO SHOOT ONE OF THEM DEAD!!

...HE FELL OVER HOLDING SOME YOUNG GIRL, BUT...

A..AND HABAKI! WHAT ABOUT HABAKI!?

EVEN MORESO WHEN THAT OPPONENT HAS BEEN ORDERED TO COMMIT SEPPUKU.

GIVE AN ORDER TO FIRE ON A REPRESENTATIVE OF THAT SAME GOVERNMENT WITHOUT GIVING AN ORDER TO KEEP FIRING AT THE ITTO-RYU, A PUBLIC ENEMY, WHILE THEY ARE NEARBY?

CORRUPT OR NO...CAN A SHOGUNATE OFFICIAL...

THE FEELINGS OF A MAN WHO WON'T BREAK, EVEN WHEN HE MUST COMMIT SEPPUKU...

SHOULDN'T YOU UNDERSTAND NOW MORE THAN EVER?

A BIT LIKE MASTER RIGHT NOW.

HE'S AN INSOLENT SCOUNDREL WHO LED A BAND OF CRIMINALS OUT THE FRONT DOOR WHILE BEING ORDERED TO COMMIT SEPPUKU!

WHY.. WHY ME?!

KUH.. UH...

EVEN I... MORE THAN ANYONE...

KHH..

OOO... OHH...

EVEN I...

WHY ME!?

EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE THE ONES... WHO SPOILT EVERY-THING... OOO...
THEY... THEY...
MORE THAN ANYONE, I WISHED FOR THE TRANQUILITY OF EDO...

BUT, WHAT INCREDIBLE SPEED, SIR HABAKI.
CARRYIN' TWENTY GUNS...

FIFTY RYOU...
HUH?

ALTHOUGH FROM WHAT I HEAR IT SEEMS ONE OF HABAKI'S SUBORDI-NATES
MADE A MESS OF THE HORSES AT THE RELAY STATION...
WHY ARE THE TORII FALLEN AROUND HERE...?
BEATS ME..

EVEN CROSSING A RIVER IN MIDWINTER SUBMERGED UP TO THE CHEST...

EVEN CARRYING A PALANQUIN DAY AND NIGHT WITHOUT STOPPING... HEH HEH!

WITH ENOUGH MONEY... ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

REMEMBER THIS! IN THIS WORLD...

FIFTY RYOU! THAT'S HOW MUCH MONEY I SPENT ON THIS JOURNEY.

THE MOBILITY OF PEOPLE WITH NOTHING TO LOSE IS PRETTY INCREDIBLE, HUH?

.....

HEHEHEHEHE HEHEHEHEHE !!!!

HOW GREAT ...

MAKIE ....

MAKIE!

THIS IS... I CANNOT SAVE HER!

WHAT WAS THAT?!

SHIT!

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

I'M AFRAID OF MY OWN WEAKNESS...

ARE YOU AFRAID OF DOGS?

WHAT CAN I DO TO BECOME THAT STRONG? PLEASE TEACH ME.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

I GUESS.. I COULD NEVER BECOME LIKE YOU...

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE RECEIVED PRAISE...

IN RETURN ...

SOMEDAY YOU MUST BECOME STRONGER THAN ME!

IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO ALWAYS BE STRONGER THAN MEN EVEN WHEN I GROW UP.

FROM NOW ON, CAN I STAY BESIDE YOU ALAWAYS AND WATCH YOUR SWORD?

ALWAYS... YOU MEAN OUR WHOLE LIVES...?

WELL... THAT'S FINE. BUT!

I SEE...

.....
WERE... YOU ABLE TO...?

I AM GLAD.

I... I COULD NOT...

THEN...
I....

STILL...
HAVE A...
REASON...
TO STAY...
BY YOUR...
SIDE....

第二百幕　終劇

THE 201ST CHAPTER: THE BLUE WHICH EMBRACES INDIGO

BEC-
AUSE.

BURN
THIS...INTO
YOUR EYES.

30ッ..

I'LL KEEP
GOING...
IT'S NOT
OVER YET...

THAT CHILD-HOOD DAY

HE LEFT THE GIRL ALONE IN THE WASTELAND INHABITED BY WILD DOGS
AFTER THAT, THE GIRL WAS STRUCK DOWN BY MY GRANDFATHER, WHO SUDDENLY APPEARED.
MY LIFE WAS SAVED BY A GIRL IN THE NIGHTTIME

RATHER THAN THE GIRL VANISHING, THE CORPSES OF DOZENS OF WILD DOGS APPEARED...

WHAT DID THAT HALF-DEAD GIRL BECOME...?
THAT DAY CONTINUES TOMORROW, UNSEEN BY ANYONE

AND THIS TIME....
I SHALL NOT
TAKE MY EYES
FROM HER!

YEP.

ENA.
THEY'RE
OUT.

SHE CAN'T MOVE VERY WELL.

DON'T WASTE BULLETS. THAT ONE WILL BE DEAD IN JUST A MOMENT.

WHAT? IT'S JUST THE ONE WOMAN.

HUH?!

.. ? DID SHE JUST... SMILE?

U

TH...

YOU TOOK YOUR EYES OFF HER JUST NOW, DIDN'T YOU?!

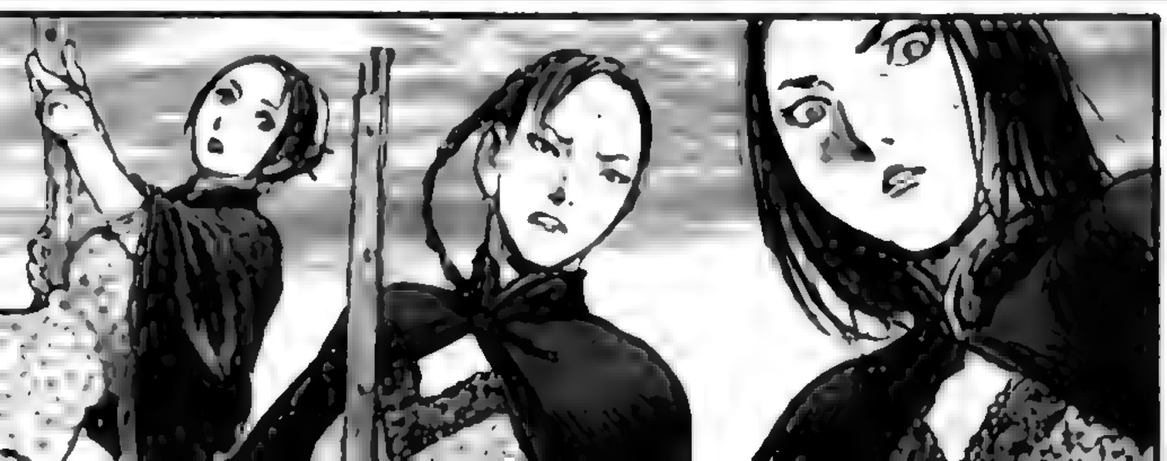
IDIOT!

∞∞

AH...

?

KUH...
DAMMIT!



ITA!

ISA-
HAYA!

.....
.....
.....

FALL BACK, SIR MIRA-BUSA!

HIYAAAAAAAAAAAH!

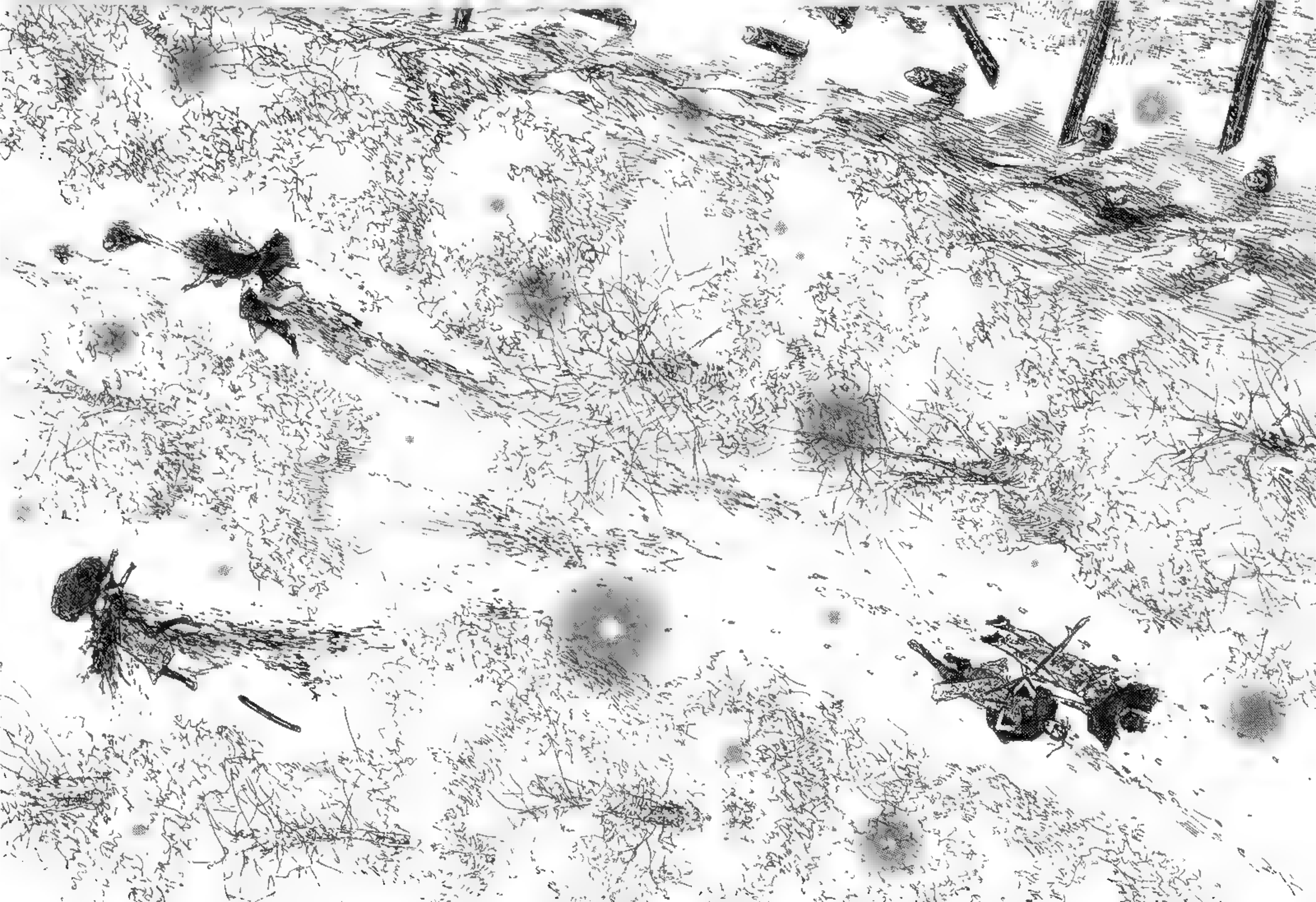
UWAAAH!

YAAH!

AH!

.....

IT..
HURTS
....



COU-GH.

COU-GH

NOT... GOOD.

HI...

HII!

LI...

LIKE THIS... GETTING TO EDO...

HABAKI IS A FOOL!

HE COULDN'T EVEN KILL ANOTSU KAGEHISA...

B-B-B-BUT WHAT MORE CAN I DO BY MYSELF?!

OW...

GUESS MY HIP IS REALLY BROKEN.

!!

AND SHE KICKED ME WITH ALL OF HER STRENGTH.

SHIT... THAT BITCH.

I COULD JUST SEE THE HORIZON OVER THE OCEAN.

I THOUGHT ILLNESS WOULD'VE MADE HER DOCILE.

WHAT THE HELL?

HUH?!

HUH?

HM?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE...!?

GE...

UGEN HANA-BUSA?!

GET AWAY!

AIEEE!

EE
...

HEEEE!

OOOH
...

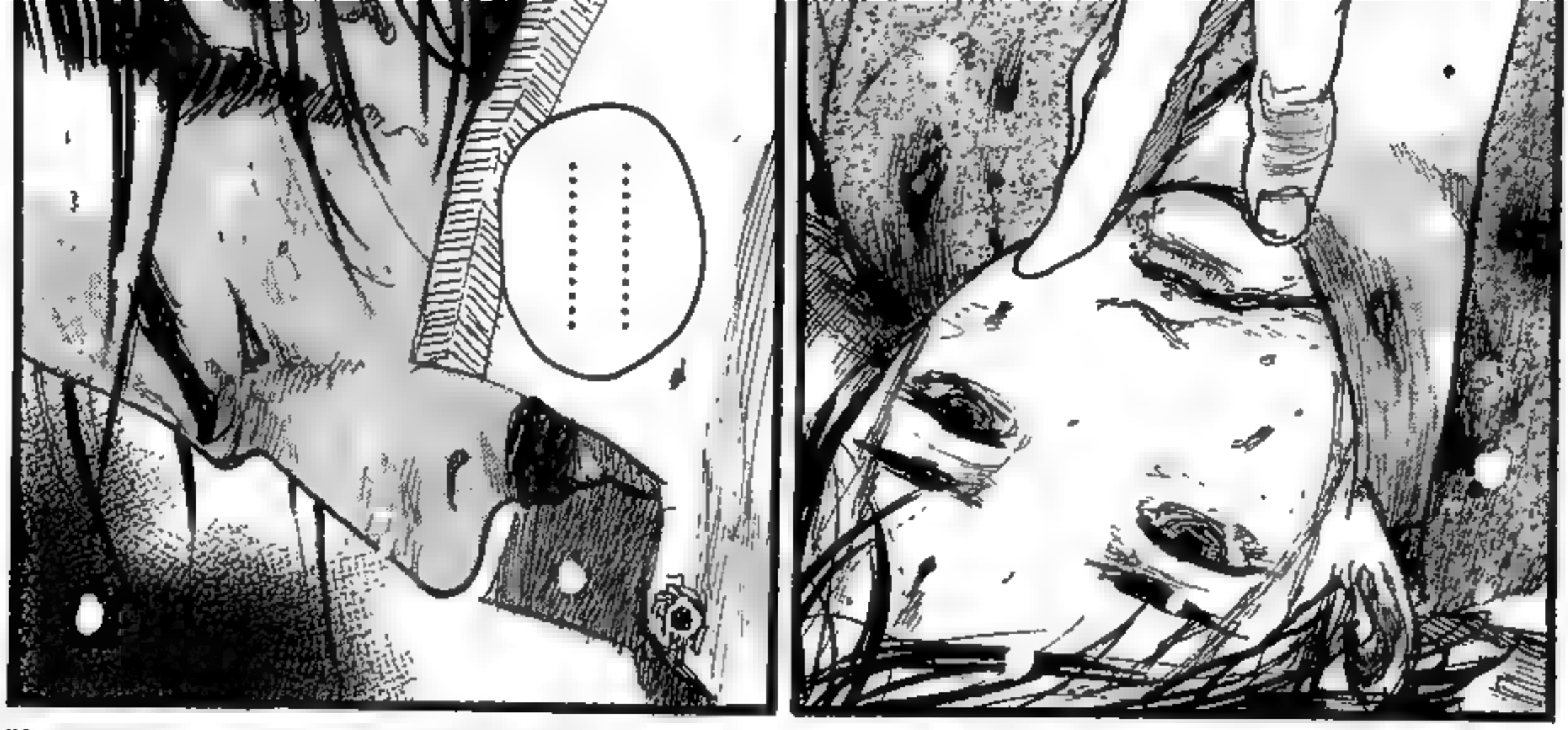
SUCH SPEED.

BUT YOU SPURRED YOUR HORSE FROM EDO CASTLE TO GET AHEAD OF US.

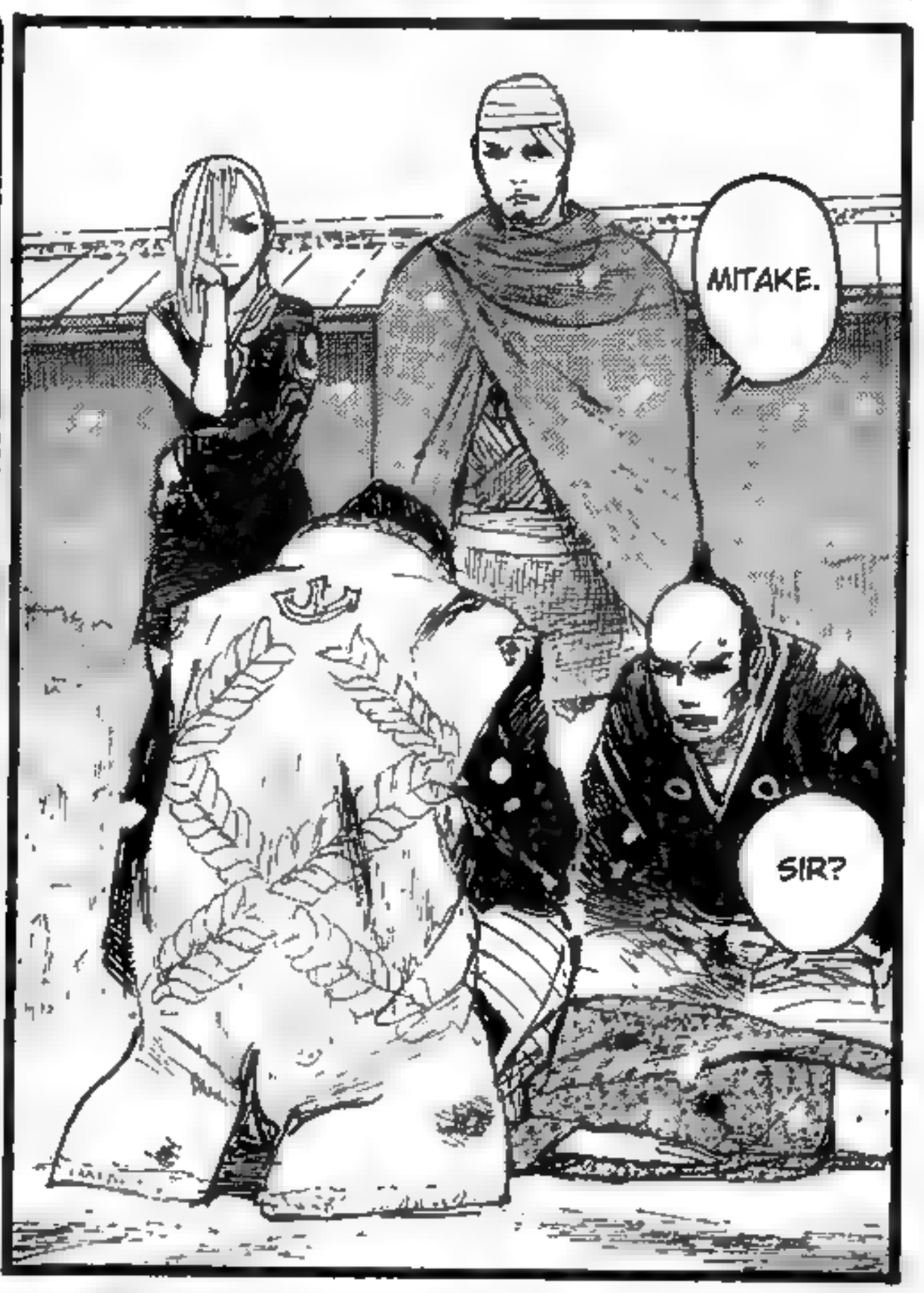
YOU MAY HAVE DRAGGED YOUR FEET AGAINST SHIRA,

!!

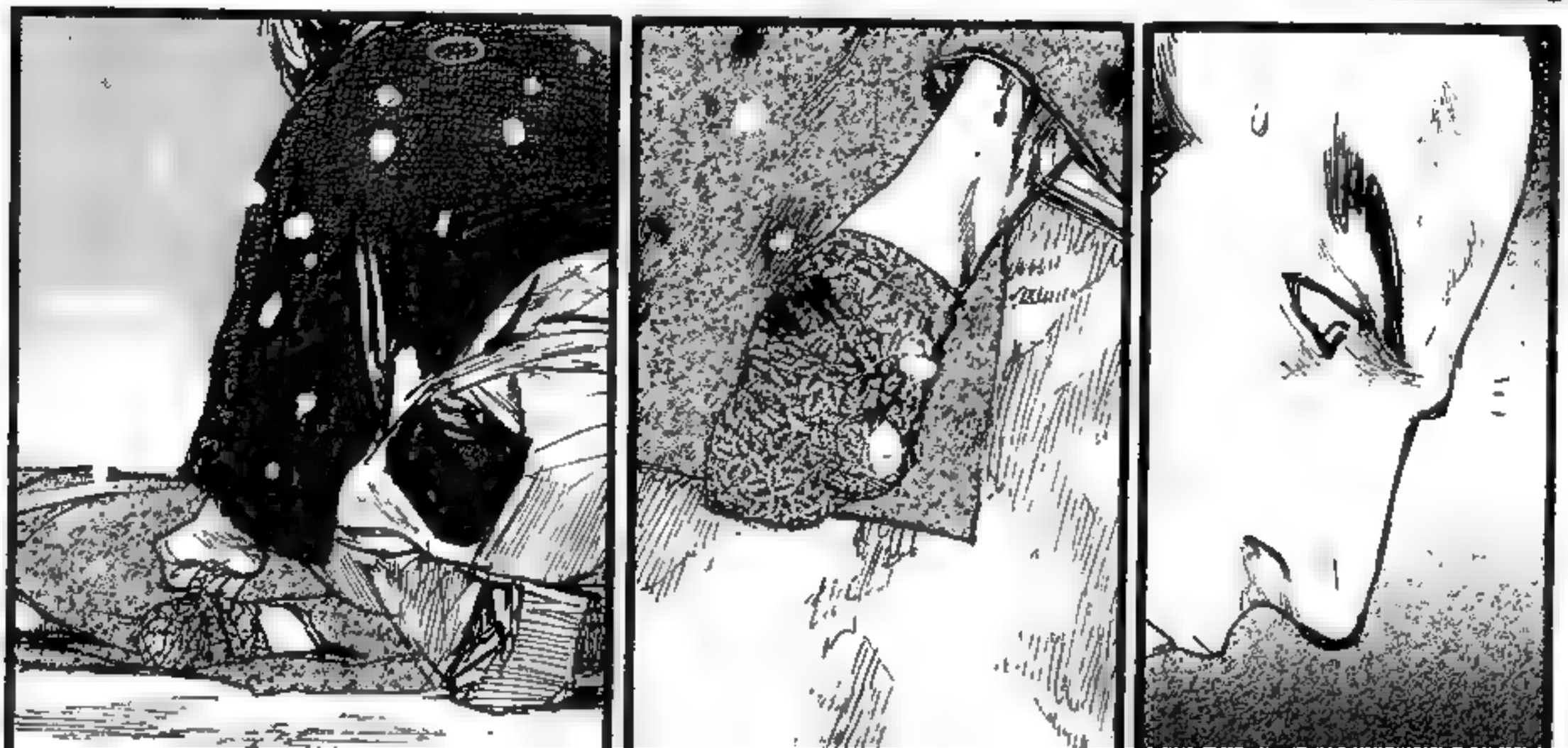
YOU'RE NOT SO BAD.

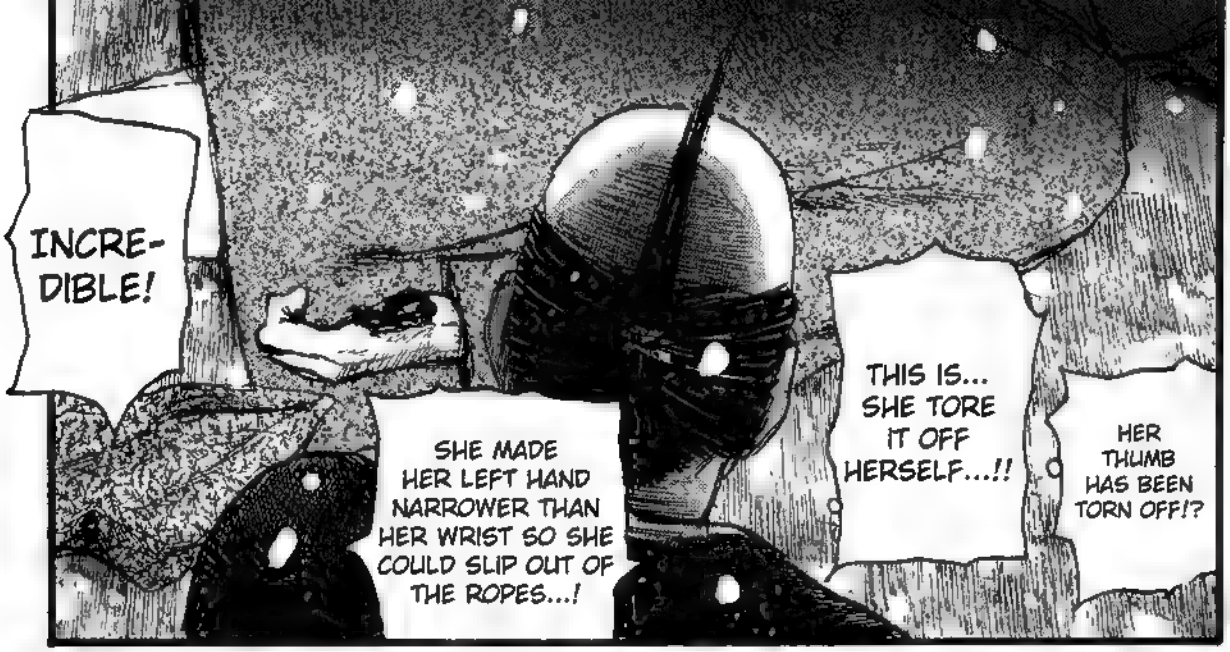

.....

WHY IS RYO HERE?
ACCORDING TO YOUR STORY, YOU BORROWED A FARMER'S SHED AND TIED HER UP WITH ROPE.


MITAKE.
SIR?

THAT WAS CERTAINLY ....
YES, SIR.



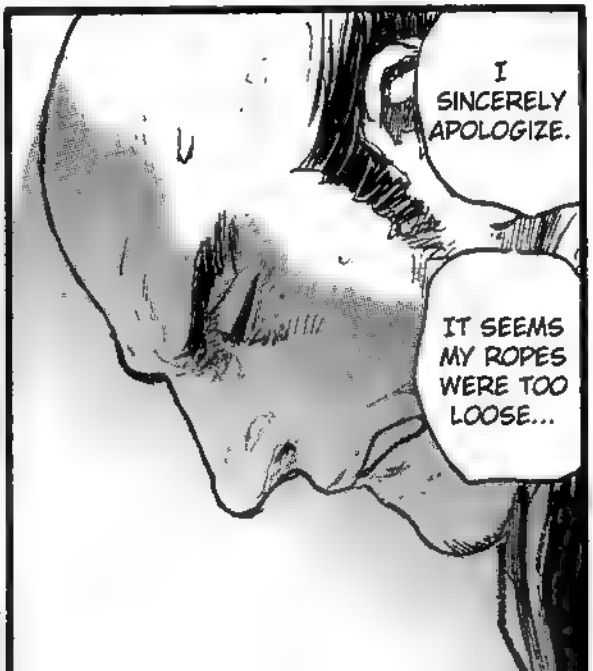

INCRE-
DIBLE!
SHE MADE HER LEFT HAND NARROWER THAN HER WRIST SO SHE COULD SLIP OUT OF THE ROPES...!
THIS IS... SHE TORE IT OFF HERSELF...!!
HER THUMB HAS BEEN TORN OFF!?

NOTHING.

MITAKE. WHAT'S WRONG?

SHE CHASED HER FATHER ALL THE WAY BACK HERE...

YOU WILL NOT BE BLAMED.
IT WAS MY ERROR TO BRING MY DAUGHTER TO THE BATTLEFIELD.
IS THAT SO?


I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE.
IT SEEMS MY ROPES WERE TOO LOOSE...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

GIICHI, HYAKURIN, MITAKE.

PLEASE STAY BY RYO'S BODY FOR ME.

WHERE?

WHAT IS LEFT FOR ME NOW, APART FROM THAT?

TO SLAUGHTER HIM. TO END THE LIFE OF ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

EVEN THOUGH I CANNOT DETECT MANY PRESENCES IN THE AREA...

YOU ARE BOUND.

YOU HAVE NOT FLED. THIS CAN ONLY MEAN ...

SO IT IS YOU, HANABUSA.

HA... HABAKI.

...WHEN I ARRIVED SIR HANABUSA HAD ALREADY BEEN TIED UP.

YOU'RE NEARBY, ARE YOU NOT?

IS THIS YOUR DOING, ANOTSU?

SIR HAB-AKI!

HEHE...

YOU TRULY ARE A MAN-EATING FIEND.

IT WAS MY COMPANION WHO MADE A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE ARTILLERY BRIGADE.

THE MAN WHO SHOT YOUR DAUGHTER DEAD?

CAN YOU CUT HIM DOWN?

SURELY YOU CANNOT SAY THAT YOU CANNOT KILL A MAN BECAUSE HE BELONGS TO THE GOVERN-MENT?

YOU, WHO HAVE EVEN LAID HANDS ON THE INNOCENT PEOPLE OF THE PORT...

...

I MAY WELL BE NAUGHT BUT A DEMON.

AS LONG AS IT IS FOR THE SECURITY OF THE SHOGU-NATE.

I WILL CERTAINLY PASS JUDGMENT ON THE ITTO-RYU...

DO NOT BELITTLE ME.

ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

ON THE CONTRARY, IS IT NOT THE CONCLUSION YOU DESIRE AS WELL?

BUT I WILL NOT KILL THIS MAN.

CUTTING DOWN THIS MAN...WILL DO NOTHING TO HARM THE ITTO-RYU.

WHO DOES NOT GRUDGE TO CUT DOWN THE TOWNSPEOPLE AND EVEN THE OFFICIALS OF OTHER DOMAINS,

THERE IS NO REASON TO KILL HIM.

THIS MAN DID NOTHING MORE THAN FIRE UPON AN ENEMY OF THE STATE.

MY DAUGHTER'S DEATH WAS DUE TO MY OWN LACK OF WISDOM.

IF YOU CAN SAY THAT...I HAVE NO REPLY.

HEHE. I SEE.

WAS LESS ANGERED THAN SURPRISED BY SIR HANABUSA'S WORK HERE TODAY.

TO BE HONEST, I TOO...

TO BRING DOWN THE MIGHTIEST BLADE IN THE ITTO-RYU.

IN ANY CASE...YOU WERE ABLE ...

PERHAPS IF WE HAD BEEN TO THE LEE-WARD SIDE- THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A WAY TO COPE WITH IT... BUT,

THE SCENT OF GUN POWDER, SHE SAID.

THE WORDS OF SIR HABAKI'S DAUGHTER, THE ONLY ONE THERE TO COME FROM THE SHORE AFTER SIR HANABUKI... IF WE HAD TAKEN THEM MORE SERIOUSLY...

HOWEVER DIM AND FADED AN EXISTENCE WE OF THE ITTO-RYU MAY BE,

UGEN HANA-BUSA. THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE KNOWN ITS TRUE POWER.

FOR THAT MATTER...

I NOW FEEL SUCH DEEP, STRANGE, EMOTIONS.

S-SIR HABAKI!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING STANDING THERE LIKE A FOOL!?

NGAAH!

AN ENEMY OF THE STATE IS BRANDISHING AN ASSASIN'S DAGGER AT THIS VERY MOMENT!

HE'S AN ENEMY OF THE STATE!

BUT WITH MY BLINDNESS, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

A THOUSAND PARDONS, HANABUSA.

ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

LET US COMPETE UNTIL ONLY ONE REMAINS.

COME!

第二百一幕　終劇

LET US COMPETE UNTIL ONLY ONE REMAINS.

COME!

THE 202ND CHAPTER. THE SWORD OF REGRET.

IN THAT CASE...

TEAR AWAY PEOPLES' COMPASSION AND BONDS OF LOYALTY...

AND WE ARE NOTHING MORE THAN ANIMALS.

BUT CAN YOU POSSIBLY IMAGINE I WILL MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR YOUR BLINDNESS?

I WILL ACCEPT YOUR RUDENESS.

THE ONLY ONES WHO BREATHE HERE ARE THE TWO OF US...

ANY OTHER LIVING PEOPLE ARE AT THE BOTOTM OF THE CLIFF.

HEH.

IN THIS COLD, NEITHER BIRDS NOR BEASTS CALL.

I WILL USE YOUR BREATHING TO FORM AN IMAGE OF YOU IN MY MIND'S EYE.

COME HERE.

ズズズ…

ザッ

THAT MEANS... NO STANDING TREES ON ANY SIDE.

...ARABLE SOIL UNDER-FOOT.

カチッ

IAI!

WHILE YOU STAND THERE THINKING WE'RE GLARING AT EACH OTHER, I SNUCK AWAY QUIETLY AND ESCAPED BY SHIP?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO, IF...

THAT IS A DEF-ENSIVE TECH-NIQUE.

SIR HAB-AKI.

WELL... IF THAT WAS A BLUFF... WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO FLEE?

WASN'T IT BECAUSE YOU WERE AWARE YOU COULD NO LONGER FACE YOUR COMRADES AND SOUGHT TO TAKE REVENGE THAT STOPPED AT NAKAMINATO?

YOU OUGHT TO DO THAT... BUT.

23.

I HAVE AN OVERWHELMING ADVANTAGE.

HOWEVER YOU LOOK AT IT...

BUT.. I CAN FEEL IT...

HE IS BEING HONED,

SHARPER THAN BEFORE!

THE REGRET OF LOSING HIS FAMILY-

THE REGRET OF THE PROTECTION OF THE SHOGUN'S FAMILY BEING VIOLATED WHILE HE WAS AWAY FROM EDO-

THE REGRET OF BEING CHASED BY THE NEW HEAD CLERK FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF THE IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS AND ORDERED TO COMMIT SEPPUKU-

OR WITH NOTHING...?

IS HIS SWORD FILLED WITH A WAIL OF REGRET?

I ON THE OTHER HAND...

MY BODY HAS BEEN SCREAMING CONTINU-OUSLY FOR THE PAST HOUR.

YET FOR SOME REASON NOW...

ANGER ....

IT HAS GIVEN ME THE POWER TO CUT HUMANS DOWN AT A SWORD-STROKE, AS IF THEY WERE BUSHES.

EVEN IF THIS CONDI-TION...

IS IT BECAUSE I CAN'T STOP MYSELF FROM FEELING AWE AT HIS ATON-ISHING DEVO-TION TO THE ARTS OF WAR...?

IS IT BECAUSE NOW HE'S BECOME NOTHING BUT A HEADSTRONG SAMURAI WHO'S LOST EVERY-THING...

WITH THIS MAN I SHOULD HATE IN FRONT OF ME, THAT ANGER IS LACKING.

フウウ

ウウ

IS THE REGRET OF THE RUINED 'ITTO-RYU' ITSELF.

THEN, IN THIS SWORD

ONE STEP.

TWO STEPS!

JUDGING BY SOUND, EACH LEAP IS ABOUT ONE SHAKU*.

WITH THE NEXT STEP, HE'LL BE STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.

* ABOUT 3.03 METERS.

SCATTER ON THE SNOWY FIELD!

I HAVE HIM!

ANOTSU KAGE-HISA!

DON!

IM...

IMPOS-
SIBLE!

THAT FOOT-FALL JUST NOW WAS...!

AAAAH!

AHHH!

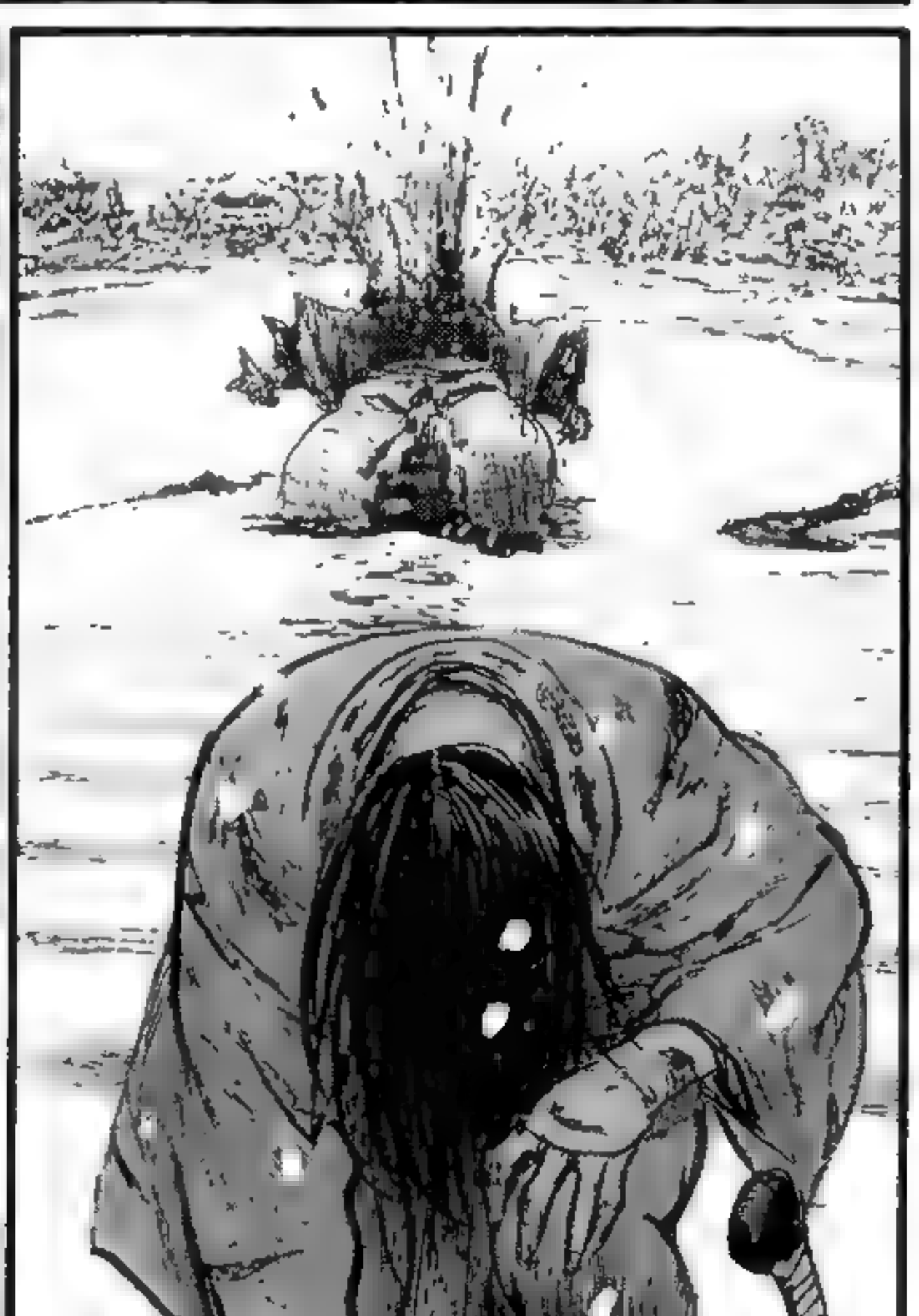
RYO

KYO

SHIMA

SAKUTARO

HA
HA
HA



SO, IT'S YOU.

...HEY.

"PLEASE TAKE ME TO ANOTSU KAGEHISA" SHE WAS BEGGING.

WHEN THE GUNS SOUNDED A LITTLE WHILE AGO... THIS ONE WOKE UP FOR A MOMENT.

SHE FELL ASLEEP BEFORE WE GOT HERE.

"HE CAN'T DIE WHERE I CAN'T SEE IT."

TENACIOUS GIRL, DON'T YOU THINK?

HEHE... HEHEHE HEHEH.

WOULD YOU RATHER I'D DONE SO LATER?

I THOUGHT I SHOULD RETURN THE AXE THAT I BORROWED, BUT...

YOU SHOULD THANK ME.

THANKS TO YOU, I'VE SURVIVED.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH...

HIS DEATH SEEMED TO PAINT A PICTURE OF REGRET.

.....

DOES NOTHING TO ALTER THE FACT THAT YOU AND I ARE WANTED MEN.

THE DEATH OF HABAKI KAGIMURA,

BUT I CERTAINLY AIN'T GONNA COMPLAIN THAT HE'S DEAD.

WELL... I GUESS THIS'LL MAKE THINGS QUIETER.

...BE THAT AS IT MAY.

...S'POSE NOT.

SO YOU WON'T DIE.

I'M GOING TO FLEE,

WILL PROBABLY BE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN.

THE HUNDRED MAN SLAYER.. THE ITTO-RYU. THE IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS...

WHEN TEN OR TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED...

OF THOSE KILLED BY THEM, I GUESS.

EXCEPT BY THE FRIENDS, FAMILIES, AND LOVERS,

I DO SUPPOSE YOU ARE RIGHT.

IN THAT CASE...

WHY NOT KILL ME NOW SO THERE'S NO MORE TROUBLE IN THAT FUTURE?

第二百二幕　終劇

THE 203RD CHAPTER: AT THE CONTEST OF GREAT, WILD WINDS

HEH.

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.

OR...WHY NOT KILL YOU NOW TO SAVE SOME FUTURE TROUBLE?

ITTO-RYU'S LEADER.

A VILLAIN SHOULD TALK LIKE A VILLAIN! JUST LIKE THAT.

THE ASANO FAMILY WAS SAT TOGETHER HAPPILY.

THE NIGHT YOU KILLED THIS GIRL'S FATHER, ASANO TAKAYOSHI.

THREE YEARS AGO,

CAN'T SAY THAT I WASN'T CAUGHT UP IN HIS DEEP-ROOTED DELUSIONS ON THAT NIGHT OF HIS DEATH.

EVEN I, WHO SHUNNED MY OWN GRAND-FATHER...

HOW MUCH STRENGTH MUST SHE HAVE HAD?

THIS GIRL, CAUGHT UP IN THE DEATHS OF HER FATHER AND MOTHER.

THERE ARE NO DOUBTS.

IS SO EASY

IN ALL HONESTY, GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THE GRUDGES OF THE DEAD?

AT THE TIME I DESTROYED THE ASANO FAMILY, I PRACTICALLY BECAME A CRIPPLE.

WHEN I BECAME CONTENT WITH THAT EASE...

IT SHOULD BE SWEET,

AND FULL AS WELL.

THERE IS NO IMPURITY IN HER DESIRE FOR REVENGE

JUST WHOSE LIFE IS THAT?

BUT...

IF I HAVE NO INTENTION OF OFFERING UP MY LIFE TO THIS GIRL,

THEN WOULD IT NOT BE AN ACT OF COMPASSION TO END HER MEANINGLESS LIFE?

...NO IMPURITIES... IS THAT RIGHT?

AS IF YOU'D KNOW A THING ABOUT IT.

SHE'S...

RATHER THAN BEING WITHOUT IMPURITY ...

SHE EVEN SPENT HER COMPASSION ON PEOPLE SHE DIDN'T NEED TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH... IN THE END,

FILLED WITH DOUBT... FROM THE START TO THE END.

STUMBLING THIS WAY AND THAT.

EVEN THOUGH I'M SUPPOSED TO BE HER BODYGUARD, SHE RISKED HER LIFE TO SAVE MINE.

EVEN THOUGH YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN HER ENEMY, HER MIND WAS DISTURBED BY YOUR WORDS.

I DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW EXHAUSTED YOU MUST BE RIGHT NOW...

DOING THAT SORT OF THING... DIDN'T BEING HER ONE STEP CLOSER TO VENGEANCE.

OF COURSE, BEING HER BODYGUARD GOT PRETTY TIRING AS WELL...

ANOTSU KAGE-HISA!

BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE CHASING AFTER YOUR BACK ANY MORE,

WELL CERTAINLY

WHAT'S WITH SUCH AN UNWORTHY ATTITUDE?

IF IT'S DOWN TO JUST THE TWO OF US, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT WHAT WE OUGHT TO'

MORNIN'.

I WAS BELOW THE CLIFFS UNTIL A LITTLE WHILE AGO. DON'T BE SO COLD.

BUT I CAME TO SEE WHAT WAS HAPPENING. BY THE WAY, YOU'VE BEEN ENTRUSTED TO MY CARE BY MANJI.

MANJI... HE IS...

IN FRONT OF YOU.

MISS... HYAK... URIN...

WHY ARE... YOU HERE...?

THAT'S THE... LATE SIR HABAKI KAGMURA.

THE MAN LYING...

ON THE GROUND... OVER THERE?

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. YOUR JOURNEY WILL BE AT ITS END.

HE NEVER SEEMED THE SORT TO LIVE A LONG LIFE, DID HE?

WHEN ONE OF THOSE TWO MEN CEASES TO MOVE...

NOW.

I... THOUGHT SO...FOR A LONG TIME.

BUT I'VE ONLY BEEN WATCHING SHADOWS.

I...

I THOUGHT I WAS WATCHING THOSE TWO...

MISS... HYAKURIN.

SINCE THE DAY HE MET ME...

HE'S FOUGHT AS MY LOYAL BODYGUARD, BUT...

MANJI...

I WONDER HOW THIS SCENE WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT.

IF HE HAD MET THE ITTO-RYU FIRST...

I WONDER WHAT MANJI WOULD DO...

AND THEN MANJI

WOULD PROBABLY WANT MANJI'S POWER, RIGHT?

ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

TO THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD IT MUST APPEAR CHARMING

THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE ITTO-RYU

EVEN A GIRL LIKE ME CAN FEEL THAT...

I'M SURE.

MANJI WOULD AS WELL

WHAT A SIGHT... IT WOULD BE.

SEEKING THE HEIGHT OF SWORDS-MANSHIP.

OPPOSING THE SHOGUNATE TOGETHER...

HEH.

THROWING YOUR LOT IN WITH THE ITTO-RYU.

SIGN UP WITH THE SHOGUNATE.

IT'S ALL THE SAME.

THAT SORT OF THING...

THERE'S NO USE TALKING LIKE THAT.

HONE-STLY...

BUT FROM THE MOMENT HE MET YOU...IT WAS JUST CERTAIN THAT MAN WOULD BECOME YOUR ALLY, AFTER ALL.

HENEH... HEH... HEH.

TO BE FRANK... FIGHTING WITH YOU...

KUH ...

YOU HAVEN'T FALLEN ASLEEP, HAVE YOU?

WHAT'S WRONG?

TO THINK I WOULDN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH LEFT... TO SEVER THAT RIGHT ARM OF YOURS...

I HAVE TO LAUGH.

IN ITSELF ... I WAS ENJOYING IT, BUT...

TO CROSS SWORDS WITH YOU TODAY!

NO...I'M REALLY HAPPY.

YOU THERE. OF THE ITTO-RYU.

I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO RELY ON YOU, BUT... PLEASE ASSIST ME IN THIS.

BUT...I'M NOT ONE OF THEM.

SO YOU KNOW THE NAME...

YOU'RE ONE OF THE "SIX DEMONS."

IN THIS PORT...I CUT DOWN MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE.

.....

WHY END YOUR OWN LIFE?

SO YOU AREN'T A COND-EMNED CRIMINAL.

FRUST-RATED.

I MIGHT HAVE BEEN...

NO... I WONDER ...

YEAH.

ORDERS FROM ABOVE, HUH?

I ALONE WAS THE ODD ONE OUT.

SHARED A FATE OF DESTRUCTION. BUT...

ALL OF THE SIX DEMONS... AND LORD HABAKI

TO BE LEFT ALL ALONE... WOULD BE QUITE SAD.

FOR THIS JOURNEY TO END AND I....

I... I REALLY WANTED TO STAND IN THE SAME PLACE AS LORD HABAKI.

BUT, AT LEAST ...

I DON'T KNOW IF MY SOUL WILL EVER BE ABLE TO FIND PEACE,

WHAT HAPPENED IN THIS PORT IS NOT SOMETHING WHICH SHOULD EVER BE FORGIVEN.

THINKING OVER WHETHER TO KILL THE COMMON PEOPLE FOR YOUR OWN CONVENIENCE.

WHAT A SELF-CENTERED WAY OF TALKING.

IT'S TRULY IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPREHEND.

JUDGING YOURSELF WITH SUCH IDIOTIC SEVERITY...

SAMURAI SUCH AS YOU...

AND IT WAS THAT PURITY...

THAT MEANT YOU HAD TO BE DESTROYED.

YOU ITTO-RYU ARE SO MUCH PURER AND SIMPLER TO UNDERSTAND.

HAHA...I SUPPOSE.

THAT...

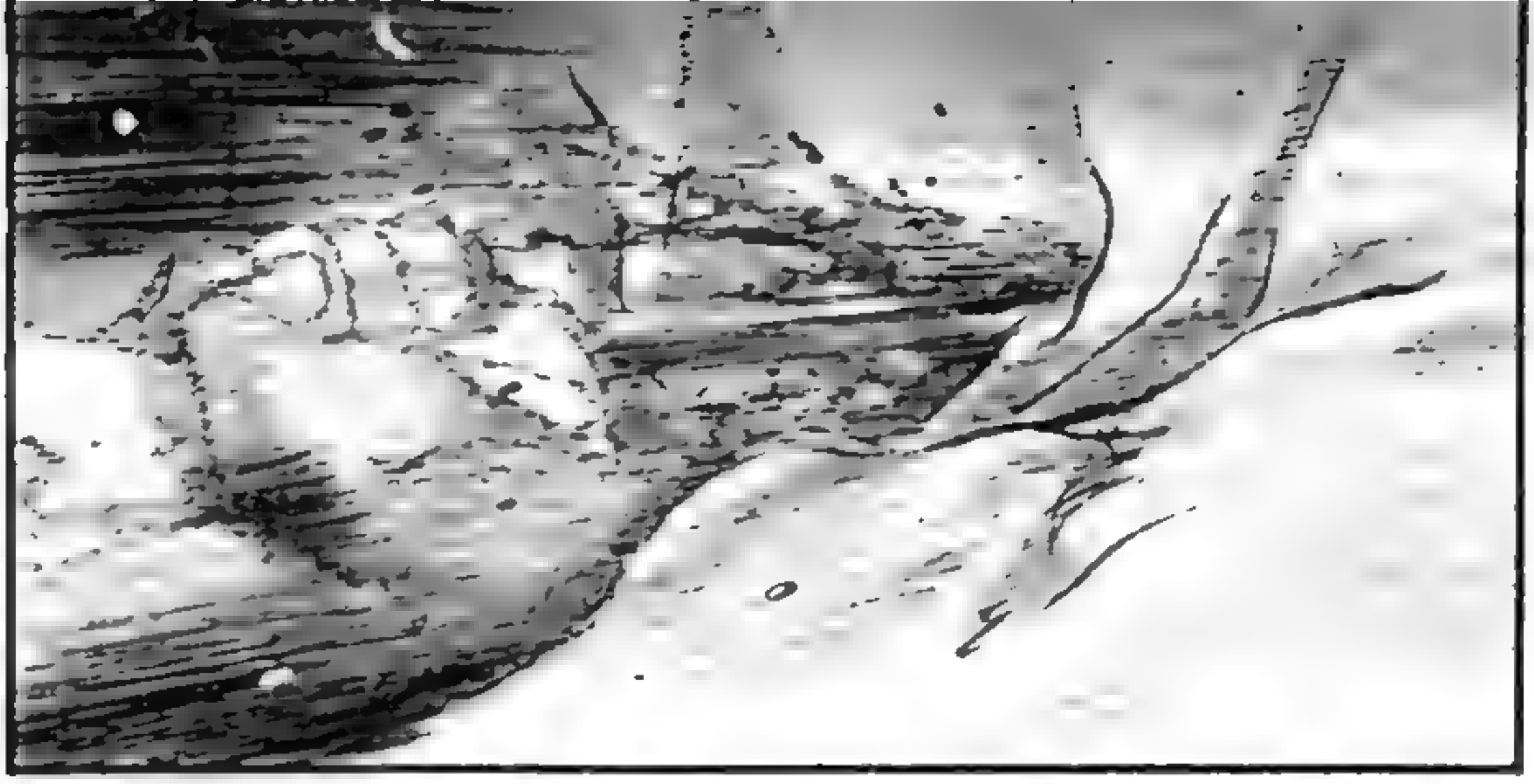
HEHE.

BUT...

THE SHOGUNATE COULD NEVER APPROVE OF METHODS LIKE YOURS...

WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN... A THRILLING WORLD TO SEE.

REBIRTH OF THE SWORD...



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THE 204TH CHAPTER: 'NOT KNOWING LIFE, HOW CAN ONE KNOW DEATH?'

HA

HA

HA!

HA

HA

HA

HA

HA

HA

MD.

....IT FEELS PLEASANT.

I WANT TO SLEEP... LIKE THIS...

I... WRUNG OUT...

MY STRENGTH TO THE... LAST DROP...

トシッ

MANJI... HAS WON.

.....

SHE'S FALLEN ASLEEP, HUH?

...AREN'T YOU GOING... TO FINISH ME OFF?

FOR YOU...

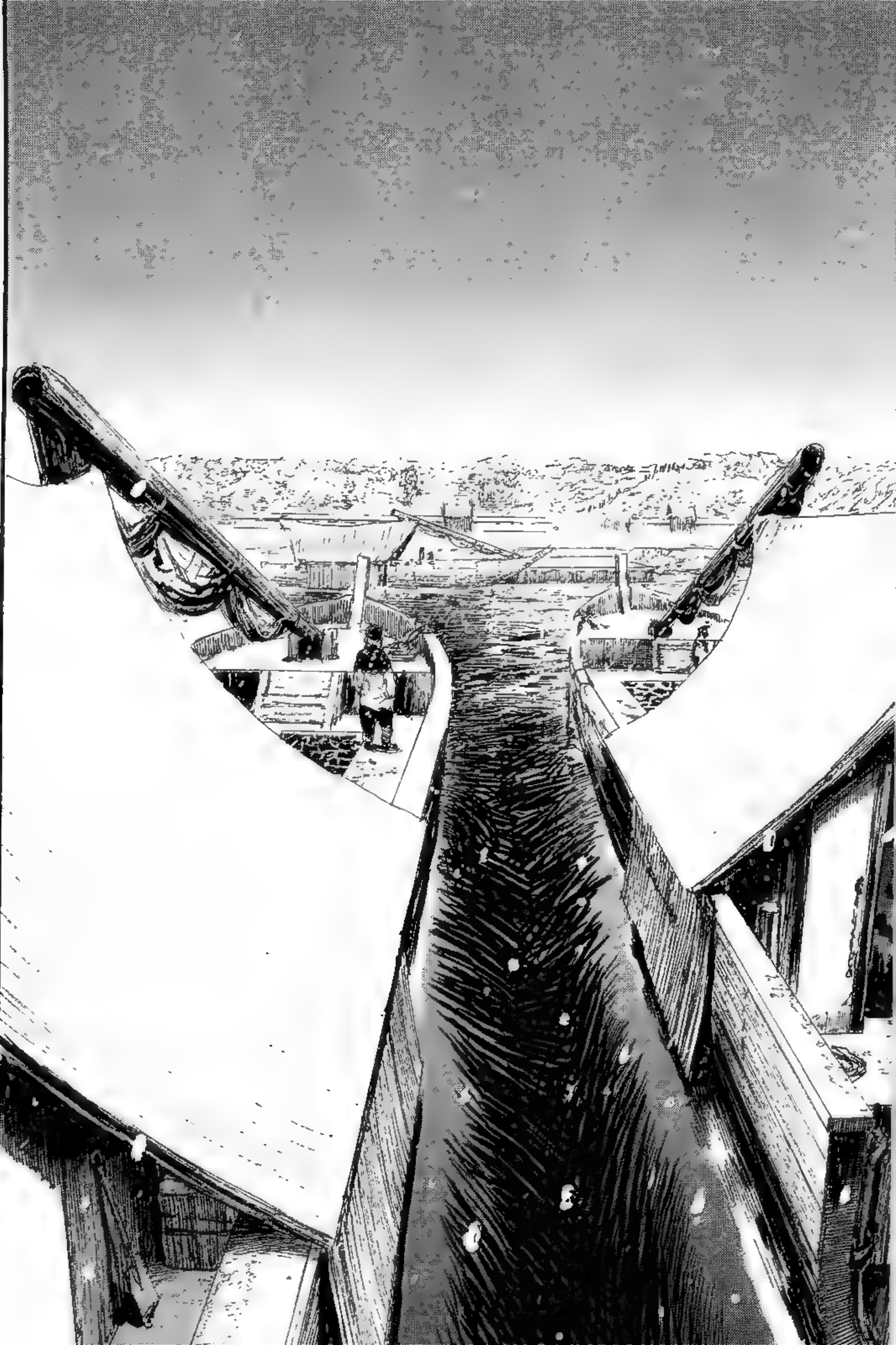
THAT...IT'S NOTHING IMPORTANT ...

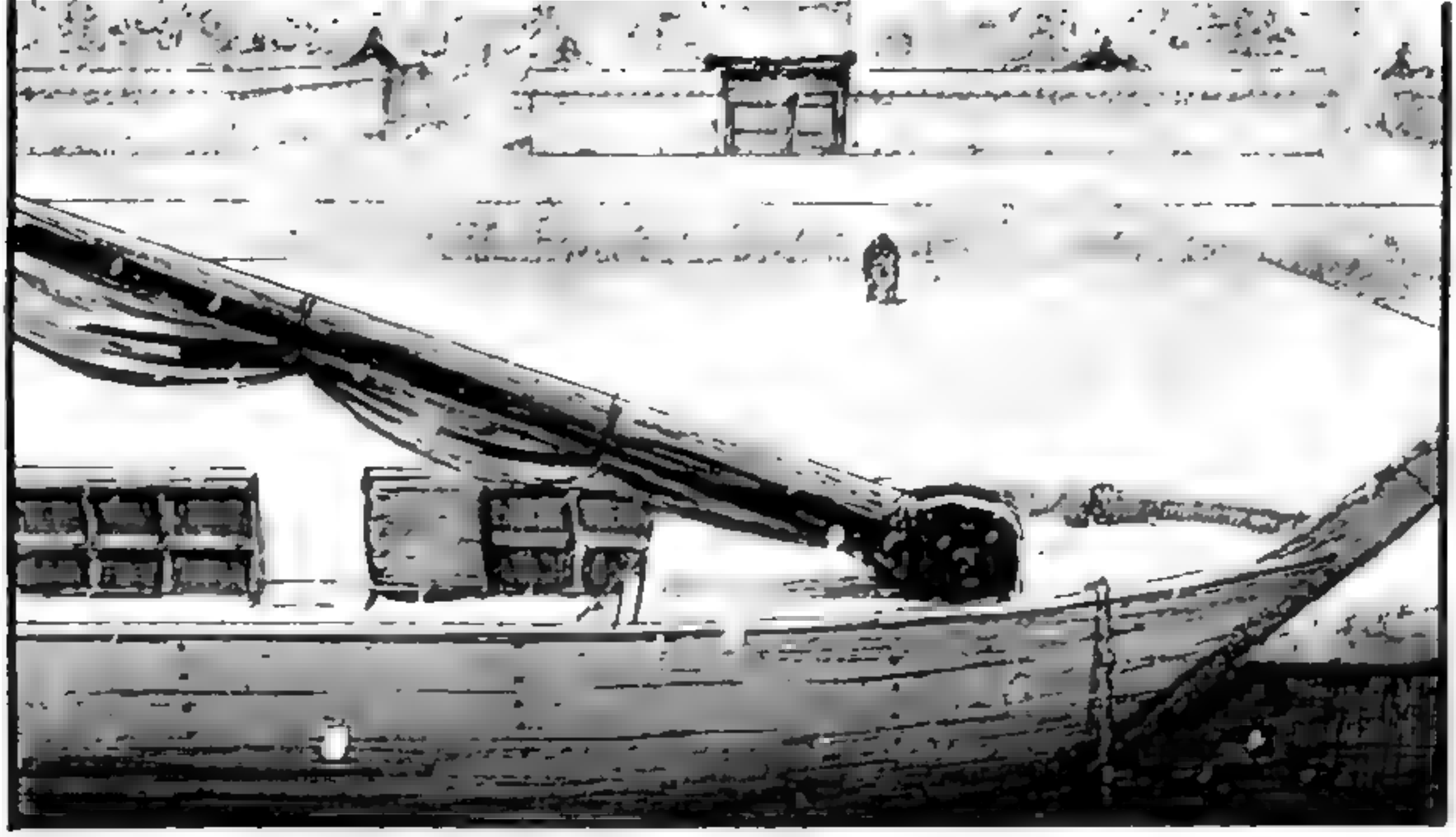
...OH.

IT SEEMS YOU TOLD RIN TO BRING ME TO THIS PLACE.

TELL ME WHAT YOU WERE PLANNING, THEN YOU CAN DIE.

IT'S TIME FOR THE SHIPS...





Gan wen si.

CHINESE: DARE TO QUESTION DEATH

HOW CAN ONE KNOW DEATH?

NOT YET KNOWING LIFE...

..I WAS ASKING THE WOMAN BUT .. WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

IT WAS COINCIDENCE THAT I USED IT TO PREVENT THE 'ITTO-RYU' FROM BEING DECEIVED BY AGENTS OF THE SHOGUNATE...

MAYBE THAT'S THE REASON... I HAVE NO GOOD MEMORIES...

I NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL, AND I READ ALOUD WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING BEFORE MY FATHER EVERY DAY, .

....NO.

YOU ARE FOND OF THE ANALECTS?

WE'VE WITHDRAWN MOST OF THE SHIPS TO HITACHI, JUST AS WE WERE TOLD.

NO, NO.

I NEVER IMAGINED OUR PURSUERS... WOULD RESORT TO SUCH VIOLENCE...

HM?

NO...

OUR LOSSES WERE JUST ONE SHIP LEFT TO KEEP LOOKOUT ...

PLEASE DO SO...

...YES.

YOU WANT US TO CARRY HER, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S ALREADY DEAD?

THE WOMAN AND YOU... IS THAT EVERYONE?

...NO... THIS IS EVERYONE.

OH... THERE'S ONE MORE.

IF YOU DON'T FINISH ME HERE, THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

....DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE ME.

...YOU'RE A NAIVE BASTARD IF YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT ACROSS THE SEA IN YOUR STATE.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY YEARS

OR DECADES IT MAY TAKE...

BUT I, OR MY DESCENDANTS WILL ONE DAY RETURN TO THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT FAIL.

HAVING SAID THAT ...

ALL I WANT,

IS FOR RIN TO FORGET YOU AND THE ITTO-RYU AND IDLE AWAY THE REST OF HER DAYS IN PEACE.

WHATEVER YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO DO TO THIS LAND DECADES DOWN THE ROAD,

I DON'T CARE!

ONCE MORE.

TO BRING THE THREAT OF THE SWORD TO THIS LAND.

WHEN YOU'RE ON THE VERGE OF DEATH...IT WOULDN'T SIT RIGHT WITH ME.

USING THIS ARM,

TO CRUSH YOU FROM BEHIND RIGHT NOW,

WHERE YOUR BODY DRIFTED OFF?

WHY DON'T WE SAY YOU WERE CUT DOWN AND FELL INTO THE SEA?

NEVER SHOW YOUR FACE IN FRONT OF RIN AGAIN, SLANTY-EYES.

FAREWELL, DEATHLESS MAN...

WELL THEN. FAREWELL, HUNDRED-MAN SLAYER.

REST EASY. THAT WAS MY INTENT.

...VERY WELL.

WAS MERELY THE BEGINNING. IT'S ANCIENT HISTORY NOW.

THE CONFLICT WITH THE ASANO FAMILY...

WHAT YOU WERE JUST SAYING UP ON THE CLIFFS...

THIS ISN'T 'FARE-WELL'! THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT ALMOST SLIPPED MY MIND!

HEY!

...OH!

AAAH!

PITIFUL MAN...

BUT SEE THE THANKS YOU GET!

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE DOING WHAT WAS RIGHT FOR THE SHOGUNATE,

NO MATTER WHERE THE ITTO-RYU ARRIVES AT THE END!

BUT WHEN I KNOW FOR SURE...

I WILL WAIT... RISE UP OR BE DESTR-OYED!

I WILL COME TO KILL YOU!

WITHOUT-

FAIL!

SO... NEVER FORGET!

HEHE HEH... HEH..

I...

SURELY.. I.... UH...

KEH.. HEHE HEH...

THAT FOOLISHNESS... MY SINFULNESS...

...HAD FORGOTTEN AFTER ALL...

I ENTRUST MY AMBITION... TO THE FUTURE... MY POSTERITY...

JUST... NOW... I...

MANJI!

BEFORE THIS FIGHT...

SINCE THAT NIGHT... OUR PATH OF JUST THREE YEARS... BEFORE LONG...

THE ITTO-RYU!

GUH HA

I MADE... ONE BLUFF...

I REGRET IT...!

HONESTLY... REGRET...

IT WILL BE... GONE FROM THIS WORLD... COMPLETELY...

TO A COMPLETELY FREE... PEACEFUL WORLD,

BY THEIR SWORDS...

THERE WERE FOOLS... WHO CLAMBERED FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS... AND THE REBIRTH OF THE SWORD.

EVEN THE SMALLEST THING...?

WAS ANYTHING CHANGED...

OR EVEN... A CENTURY FROM NOW..

IN TEN YEARS...

I WANTED SOMEONE... TO VERIFY THAT WITH THEIR OWN EYES.

I...WILL NEVER FORGET.

THAT... IS MY FINAL WISH...

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THE 20STH CHAPTER:
AS THE SNOW
OF FORGETFULNESS FALLS

...WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO BLACK HAIR.

YEAH?

HEY, ITOI, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS

BUT IT'S MORE FUN THAN SWINGING A SWORD AROUND

HMM... I SUPPOSE SO

WOULD IT BE BETTER TO FLATTEN THEM OUT ON THEIR SIDES LIKE THIS?

THANKS, SENIOR

YOU CATCH ON QUICK

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME RAISING AUBERGINE

IT'S BECAUSE I WAS ORIGINALLY A COMMONER

HAYA, PASS THE KONBU

I HAVE TO BRING THE CONTAINERS BACK

I HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO CHAT. HURRY AND FINISH EATING

IS THE SHOP ALRIGHT, HAYA?

WHY NOT TAKE A QUICK BREAK?

BUT...

AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF THE SHOGUNATE, ITTO-RYU LEADER?

THERE'S NO WAY I'LL BE CAUGHT... HABAKI AND HANABUSA ARE BOTH DEAD

IN THE END, YOU CAME BACK TO EDO

?

...BESIDES

I'M STUCK ON THE WORDS OF THE LAST MAN I CUT DOWN

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF ME WITH MY MOUTH HIDDEN...

THE REBIRTH OF THE SWORD, HUH...

THAT...

WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN... A THRILLING WORLD TO SEE.

I JUST HATED THOSE SAMURAI BASTARDS,

BUT TO BE HONEST... THOSE THINGS NEVER ROUSED MY INTEREST.

REBIRTH OF THE SWORD... PROSPERITY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS...

HONESTLY, I THINK IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF THINGS LIKE SWORDS WENT AWAY.

AND I WAS JUST... GLAD THAT THE ITTO-RYU WAS GOING TO CRUSH THEM.

THAT'S WHAT BOSS ANOTSU AND THE ITTO-RYU ALWAYS STRIVED FOR.

I FOLLOWED AFTER HIM RIGHT TO THE END...

I JUST COULDN'T LEAVE HIM ALONE.

I GUESS I LIKED THE BOSS...

I COULDN'T TAKE THAT SHIP.

EVEN FOR THE BOSS, IT COULDN'T HAVE LED TO ANYTHING GOOD.

I LIKED HIM, SO I FELT I HAD TO SEE HIM OFF AT THE VERY END.

FIRST OF ALL,

I SEE...

REN'S GRAVE, I MEAN.

IT ISN'T ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA.

OH, THIS IS THE PORTION FOR THIS TIME.

HE SAYS HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.. SORRY.

I SEE...

...NO, IT'S FINE.

SO, THIS IS IT FOR TODAY.

IT'S BECAUSE I WON'T BE ABLE TO COME FOR A LITTLE WHILE...

ISN'T THIS MORE THAN USUAL?

HONESTLY, I TOLD HER SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY ME BACK.

FORGIVENESS IS BESIDE THE POINT.

I STILL HAVE RESENTMENT FOR THAT WOMAN.

AND ABOUT WHAT SORT OF PERSON FATHER WAS,

...KNOWING ALL ABOUT THE ITTO-RYU,

...YOU STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN HER?

NOT RESENTMENT FOR FATHER'S DEATH.

SHE COULDN'T PULL HERSELF AWAY RIGHT UP TO THE END. I RESENT THAT FOOLISHNESS.

SHE KNEW THE EMPTINESS OF REVENGE... AND WHILE KEEPING ME AWAY FROM IT,

YOU GET CAUGHT UP IN THINKING THAT YOU CAN'T MOVE FORWARD UNTIL YOU'VE TAKEN REVENGE... THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

IT'S FOR ONESELF.

ISN'T FOR THE PERSON WHO DIED.

THE GREATER PART OF REVENGE,

THAT'S PROBABLY INEVITABLE.

I WONDER IF SHE HESITATED WHEN SHE CUT DOWN ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

BUT...I WONDER IF THAT'S REALLY HOW IT IS.

I WONDER IF SHE FELT REFRESHED?

I WONDER IF I WOULD BE ABLE TO PASS MY DAYS IN PEACE IF I KILLED HER.

THEN IT'S ULTIMATELY MEANINGLESS.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHETHER YOU TAKE REVENGE OR NOT, IF IT DOESN'T CLEAR YOUR HEAD,

IF SHE WAS RIGHT TO DO IT.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW...

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF YOU CAN'T SUPPORT YOURSELF LIKE THAT?

I SUPPOSE THAT MEANS YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF TO TAKE THE SAME PATH AS HER AND DEVOTE YOURSELF TO REVENGE.

THEN I WANT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE MY LIVING WITH THESE PAINTINGS,

AND SHOW HER THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

PLEASE TREAT ME WELL, TEACHER.

I DON'T THINK YOU'LL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

WELL, ANYWAY,

WELL, WELL... THAT'S A BIG RESPONSIBILITY.

...SHIT. THAT BRAT...

AH! YES SIR!

OH, TANPOPO.

HE'S MADE AMAZING PROGRESS IN THESE THREE AND A HALF MONTHS, HUH RENZOU?

TO THINK THAT MY FATHER WAS A PAINTER AS WELL!

YOU'RE IN THE WAY.

KEEPING ALL OF MASTER'S AFFECTION FOR HIMSELF...!!

WHAT IS HE TRYING TO DO!?

WHAT!? REALLY!?

NAGASAKIYA IS TAKEN WITH YOUR FOLDING SCREENS,

AND WANTS TO PRESENT THEM AT THE NEXT AUTUMN EXHIBITION.

YOU WANT ME TO GO STAND IN THE KITCHEN!?

HUH!?

ISN'T IT THOUGH?

PLEASE PREPARE LUNCH WITH TATSU.

I UNDER-STAND, BUT ..

Y-YES SIR!

THAT'S SO!!

MEGURO.

YOUR SKILLS MIGHT LIE IN THAT DIRECTION.

RATHER THAN PAINTING,

YESTERDAY'S DUCK MEAT STEW WAS PRETTY GOOD.

IT SEEMS YOU'RE STILL A MASTER OF JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS AS WELL.

OH, YES... HUH? WHAT?

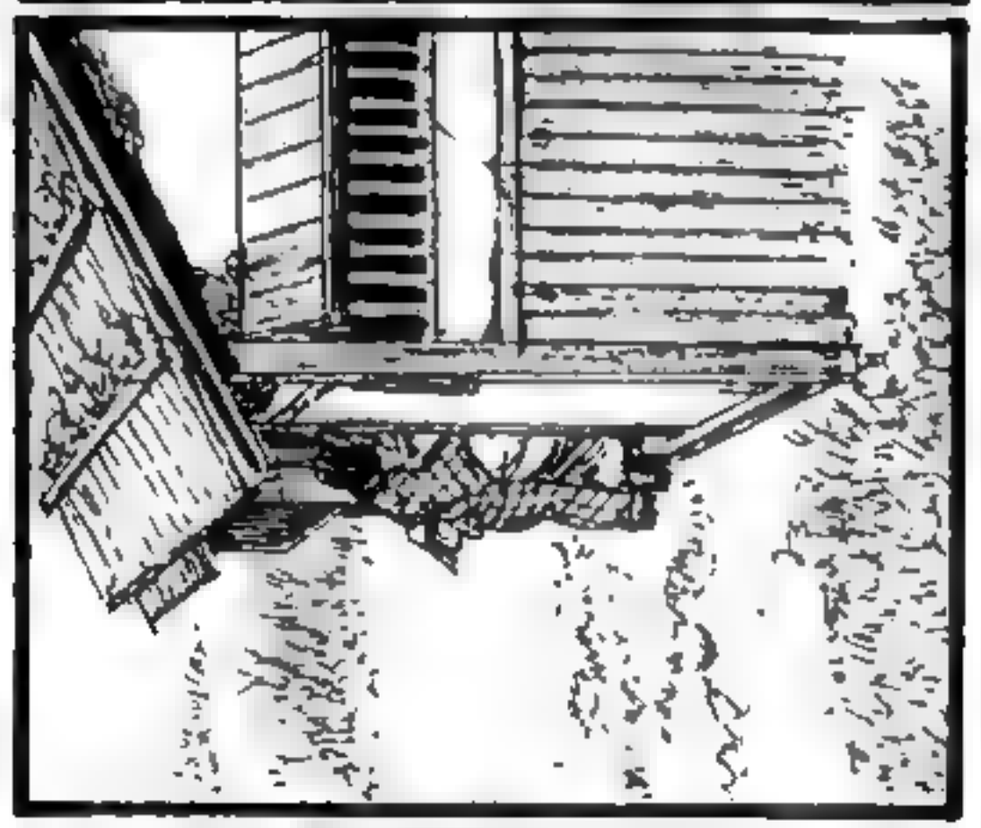
THAT YOU'VE ACKNOWLEDGED MY WIFELY QUALITIES!?

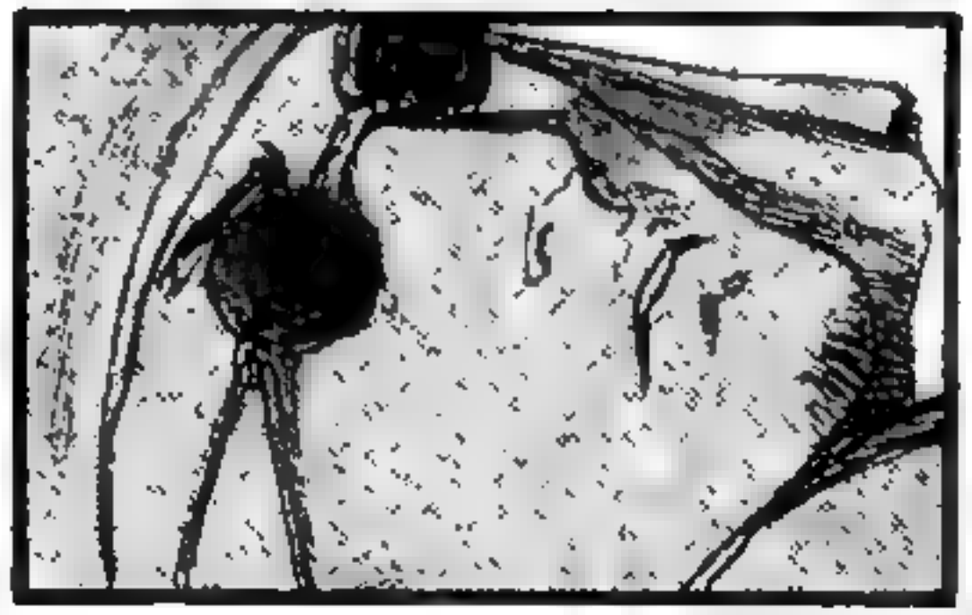
TEACHER...! DOES THAT MEAN YOU'VE RECOGNIZED ME!?

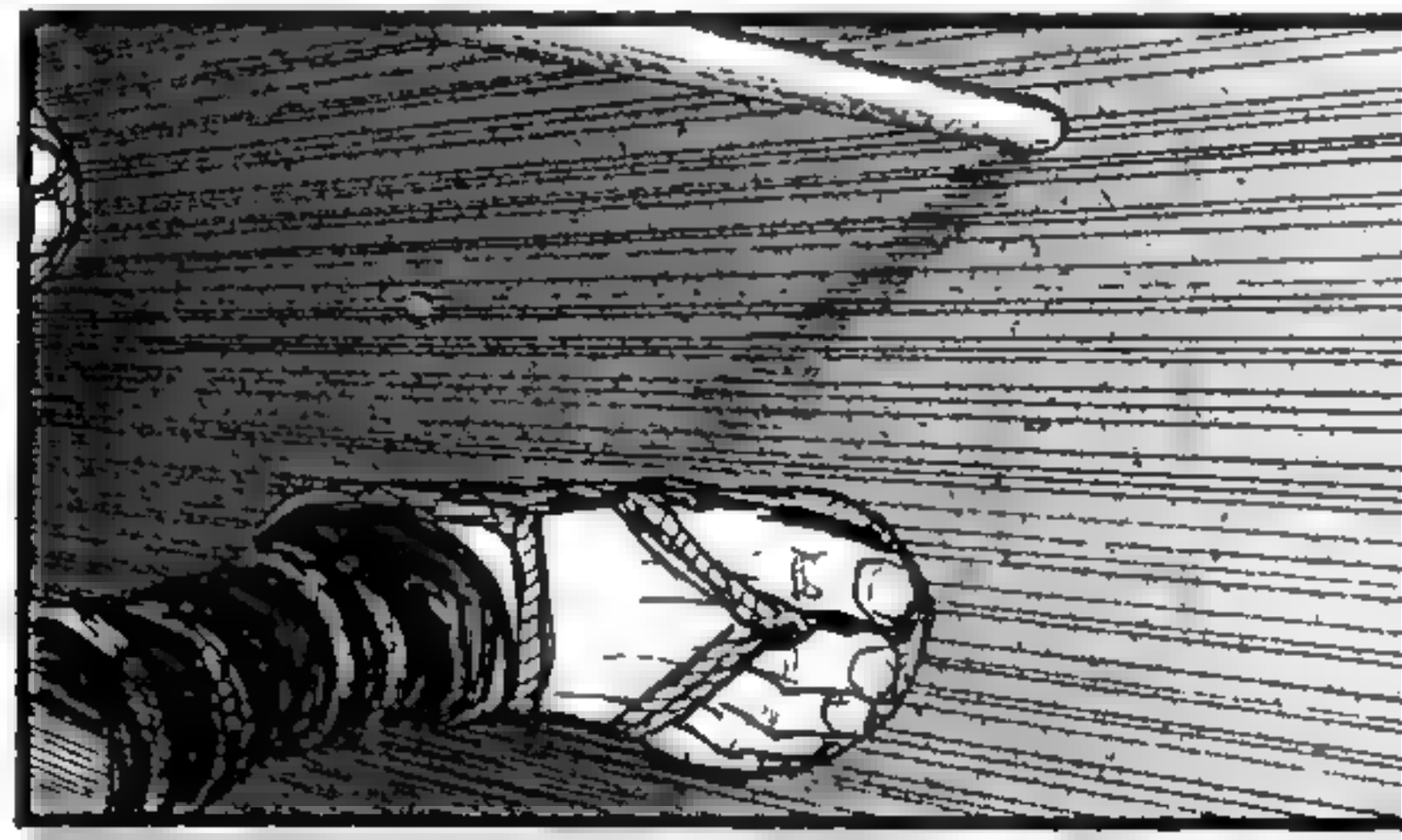
...YES. FORTY PAIRS. CERTAINLY.

... THANK YOU...

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU DO GOOD WORK.







EEK...

WHO ARE YOU!?

WH...

I THOUGHT THE OLD MAN

MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOMEONE I KNOW...

...NO...

I'M SORRY...

DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH US!?

...OUR REAL HOME

YOU LIVE HERE...?

HAS BEEN MISSING UNTIL JUST NOW.

MY GRAND--FATHER

IS SAMEI VILLAGE.

YES, YES, RICE CAKE

SO IT LOOKS LIKE HE DOESN'T WANT TO LET GRANDFATHER BACK INTO THE HOUSE.

HE ORIGINALLY CAST AWAY HIS FAMILY AND WENT OFF ON HIS OWN,

AND THEN MY FATHER WENT THROUGH A LOT OF HARDSHIPS BECAUSE OF HIM,

RICE

CAKE

BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, THREE DAYS AGO,

HE CAME BACK ALL WORN OUT

I THOUGHT THAT WAS GOING TOO FAR... SO I DID THIS.

BUT

HE'D CHANGED SO MUCH... THAT I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS HIM AT FIRST...

HE DOESN'T REALLY REMEMBER ME.... OR EVEN THAT I'M HIS GRANDCHILD.

IT LOOKS LIKE

I SUPPORT HIM HERE IN SECRET.

CHEW CHEW

...WAS HE A FRIEND OF YOURS?

PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM.

...NO.

HIZEN, SHIMABARA DOMAIN

ISAKUUU!

H-HELP WITH THE HARVEST, DOWA...

LOOK AT THIS LOOK AT THIS

...FUGA?

HE STINKS LIKE FISH. !

HE'S COME AROUND....

UWAH

BUSHU!!

"I HAVE A FEELING I'LL GET SMARTER IF I ONLY EAT FISH" !?

HAHAHA

ROIFUMU

BUHHHI

THAT'S ONLY A GUESS!

HE ISN'T EVEN SAYING WORDS!

IT COULDN'T HAVE COME FROM EDO...

D-DOWA, THIS IS A RIVER TAXI...

OZUHAN...!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!?

YOUR HAIR!

OH! MS. HYACINTH!

AH...! PLEASE DON'T RUN, THE BABY...!

OH, SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE. HEEEYY!

MY BODY'S HEALED... I NEEDED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT I NEED TO DO FROM NOW ON.

YES.

ARE YOU REALLY GOING AROUND DOOR TO DOOR?

WASN'T IT COLD OF YOU NOT TO COME SEE ME!?

ALTHOUGH I'M ONLY GOING TO THE PLACES OF THE ITTO-RYU NOBLES WHOSE ADDRESSES WERE CLEARLY LISTED IN THE CENSUS DATA I GOT FROM DOCTOR SOURI.

IT'S THE BEST WAY TO BE ABLE TO WANDER AROUND.

THEN I REMEMBERED THE COURT PHYSICIAN I MET IN EDO CASTLE...

I PLAN TO KEEP THAT UP FOR A WHILE.

...HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY LIVED LIKE THAT FOR A YEAR...?

AND THEN I WORK TWO MONTHS TO PAY BACK THE MONEY.

I'LL GO ON A ONE-MONTH PILGRIMAGE,

MAKES ME WANT TO UNDRESS.

WOW, TODAY'S A REAL SCORCHER.

THAT COLD SEEMS UNREAL NOW.

THAT PERSON'S FAMILY

ARE MY COUNTRYMEN.

MY PATERNAL GRANDFATHER AND HIS WERE CLOSE.

BUT THAT WAS FOUR GENERATIONS BACK.

IT LOOKS LIKE HE ENDED UP DOING THINGS THAT COULDN'T BE UNDONE BECAUSE OF THAT.

HE WAS SCARY, BUT A GOOD PERSON... OR SO THEY SAID.

HE TOOK AN INTEREST IN THE WEAPONS AND FURNISHINGS OF MY LAND...

BUT I'LL TAKE HIM WITH ME... I PROMISED HIM THAT.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I DON'T SEE HIM AS A KINSMAN,

HUH!?

...NOT DEAD...*

*CHINESE

DO YOU LIKE THE ANALECTS?

OF COURSE NOT.

HUH? WHO DO YOU MEAN?

I WONDERED IF YOU WOULDN'T LET HIM GET AWAY.

OH, I THINK IT MOVED...

CAN YOU TELL?

TO TELL THE TRUTH,

THERE WAS CERTAINLY... A PART OF ME THAT WAVERED.

...ALTHOUGH,

NO WAY.

ANOTSU KAGEHISA.

WHEN THE WORD "CHILD" LEFT THAT MAN'S MOUTH... I KNEW FOR CERTAIN

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE AND ANOTSU KAGEHISA AND HABAKI KAGIMURA MET FACE TO FACE.

BACK THEN... IN NAKAMINATO,

THAT I COULDN'T LET HIM LIVE.

REVENGE. RETRIBUTION. THE REVIVAL OF THE SWORD.

NO MATTER HOW THEY MADE MERRY,

I FELT THAT I HAD TO AT LEAST PROTECT THAT.

I COULD NEVER ALLOW THAT

TO CARRY OVER INTO THE NEXT ERA.

THAT MAN AND I,

WE WERE BOTH CRUSHED BY A LOT OF THINGS... AND CAME TO CRUSH THINGS OURSELVES.

THAT'S WHY,

I'D LIKE TO BE EMBRACED BY A FINE MAN AND BE BLESSED WITH A CHILD TOO.

WHO!

OH, NOTHING.

I WAS THINKING THAT...

HM?

...LIKE MS. HYAKURIN...

AND I WANT TO HAVE AN OPEN TALK WITH RENZOU.

I WANT TO FINISH THIS PILGRIMAGE,

BUT BEFORE THAT... IF I CAN,

THEN I

THERE'S EVEN ONE PERSON WHO SAYS "I WON'T FORGIVE YOU,"

AND THEN... IF, DURING THAT PROCESS,

WILL GIVE THAT PERSON MY LIFE.

I WANT TO END EVERYTHING WITH THAT.

HUH, REALLY?

HE SAID ALMOST EXACTLY WHAT YOU JUST DID.

BEFORE... THERE WAS THIS MAN I HAD A ROUND OF DRINKS WITH;

.....

BUT... I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING, LOOKING AT YOU AND HIM.

ALTHOUGH HE'S ALREADY DEAD NOW.

HE WAS A REAL LADY-KILLER.

WHAT SORT OF PERSON WAS HE?

WHEN THEY'RE INHERITED, I WONDER IF THEY'RE SOMETHING THAT JUST DOESN'T HAVE TO BE INHERITED COMPLETELY.

BUT YOUR PARENTS' "FEELINGS,"

IT'S TROUBLESOME TO CARRY AROUND YOUR PARENTS' PENT-UP GRUDGES,

YOUR PARENTS' FEELINGS AREN'T A CURSE.

AND BECAUSE

BECAUSE PARENTS AND CHILDREN ARE TIED TOGETHER,

IT'S MANJI...

...I SEE...

YEAH... YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT...

OF COURSE I AM.

OH.

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FINAL CHAPTER MANJI AND RIN

...SO HE LEFT EDO.

HAS BEEN FIXED FOR A LONG TIME, MORE THAN A YEAR.

IT SEEMS THAT MR. MANJI'S "EDO PRICE"

...ACCORDING TO WHAT DR. SOURI SAID...

THEIR LEADER WAS THE HEAD JUDGE AT THE TIME, HABAKI KAGIMURA-

ALTHOUGH OF COURSE SOME VASSALS WERE OPPOSED TO THE VERDICT...

THEY SAY A HUNDRED PURSUERS WERE SENT AFTER HIM, BUT THAT IN THE END THEY WERE UNABLE TO CAPTURE HIM... SEEMS LIKE IT WAS SOMETHING BIG.

MS. HYAKURIN, I HEARD FROM YOU HOW HE HAD TO GO TO GREAT PAINS TO OBTAIN A PERMIT WHILE I'D GONE TO KAGA ON MY OWN SELFISH WHIMS.

HABAKI KAGIMURA GUESSED THAT WHEN HE MADE HIS REQUEST TO THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS. BUT AFTER HE LOST HIS STANDING DUE TO THE CASE OF THE IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS...

THERE WAS ONE MORE THREAT TO THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT. THAT THE 'ITTO-RYU' AND MANJI WERE HOSTILE.

BECAUSE OF THOSE CIRCUM-STANCES.

THAT'S RIGHT. A PERMIT WAS GRANTED WITHOUT ANY DIFFICULTY IN MITOJI.

BESIDES, THERE WAS ALSO THE PERCEPTION OF THOSE 'IMMORTALITY EXPERIMENTS.'

THE EXPLO-
SION AT
THE BEACH

THE HABAKI
FAMILY WAS
WIPED OUT.

WAS ALSO CONSIDERED
THE MISMANAGEMENT
OF THE MASTER OF
THE HABAKI FAMILY,
WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED
IN THE IMMORTALITY
EXPERIMENTS.

THAT'S CERTAINLY
PUTTING THINGS
BLUNTLY.

ESSENTIALLY,
IT SEEMS THE
SHOGUNATE
GOVERNMENT
DIDN'T EVEN
TAKE NOTICE OF ME.

FOR A TIME,
MY DESCRIPTION WAS
POSTED AS AN OFFICIAL
BULLETIN, SENT BY
HABAKI KAGIMURA.

SOMEHOW,
IT'S COMPLICATED...
AFTER ALL,
I OWE MY LIFE
TO THAT LORD-

...ACTUALLY,
IT WAS MOSTLY
LORD HABAKI
PAYING FOR HIS
OWN MISTAKES,

SO I'M HONESTLY
GLAD THAT YOUR
SHACKLES HAVE BEEN
REMOVED, BUT...

MANJI.

HUH?

...SO,

ARE YOU
ALRIGHT
WITH IT?

...MY...

IF YOU'RE GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE FROM EDO, CAN'T YOU ASK HIM TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD AGAIN?

HABAKI KAGIMURA AND ANOTSU KAGEHISA ARE BOTH GONE-

MY PILGRIMAGE... THIS JOURNEY...

THAT'S THE KIND OF JOURNEY IT IS.

I WON'T BE KILLING A SINGLE PERSON.

WEEPING PEOPLE WITHOUT ANY STRENGTH OF THEIR OWN, PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD THEIR LOVED ONES SNATCHED AWAY AND SPEND THEIR SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN REGRET, PEOPLE LIKE THAT

THAT'S WHAT A CERTAIN ELDER TOLD ME...

KILLING PEOPLE AND PROTECTING PEOPLE ARE BOTH ATONEMENT TO THAT MAN...

I...

I'M... NO LONGER...

SHOULD BE AT THAT MAN'S SIDE... THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

LET'S GO, MS. HYAKURIN.

OH.

ALRIGHT...

I HOPE...
THAT YOU'LL
GIVE BIRTH TO
A HEALTHY CHILD.

HUH?

AH...
THANKS...

THE CHILD IN MY BELLY DOESN'T NEED A BRAT LIKE YOU TO WORRY ABOUT IT.

IDIOT!

YOU DAMN BRAT!

!?

....TCH....

AS FOR 'BEING ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS' LIKE THAT... YOU'RE TEN YEARS TOO EARLY.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TALKING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN? YOU'RE A CHILD YOURSELF!

TRY LOOKING AT IT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A MATURE WOMAN LIKE ME.

ALTHOUGH I'M SAYING THAT MYSELF.

THEY SHOULD MAKE TROUBLE FOR THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM.

WANTING TO BE WITH SOMEONE OR WANTING TO SAY SOMETHING...

BRATS SHOULD ACT LIKE BRATS.

ALWAYS WANTING SOMETHING OR WANTING TO EAT SOMETHING...

.....AAAAAAAHH

AAAAAAAAHHH

AAAAAAAAH...

AAAAAAAAAHH

AAAAAAAAAHH

- NINETY YEARS LATER -

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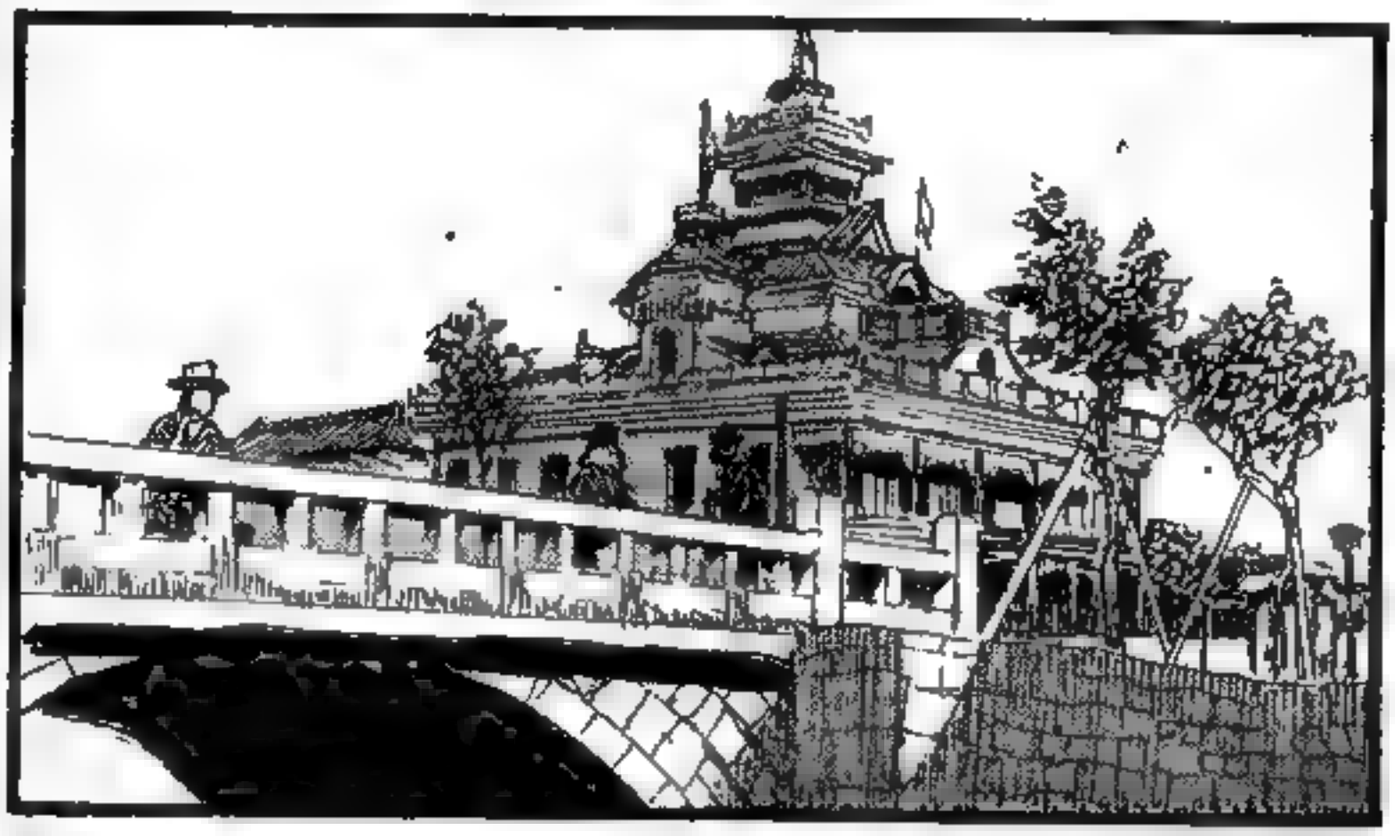


HEY, YOU! STOP RIGHT THERE!

OH!

HOW MANY TIMES HAS IT BEEN NOW!?

YOU STUPID BASTARD!

HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP WEARING THAT SWORD!?

IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE THE PROCLAM-ATION!

OH...

はぁ…

WHAT?

YEAH, YEAH.

UNDER-STAND!?

NEXT TIME I CATCH YOU, I'LL CONFISCATE THEM NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY!

GRR!

IT DOESN'T PROHIBIT OWNING SWORDS, DOES IT? I'M PRETTY SURE...

THE SWORD PROHIBITION JUST SAYS THAT IT'S ILLEGAL TO WEAR A SWORD.

FUUH...

...YOU'LL GET A SCOLDING FROM THE OFFICIALS IF YOU DIG HOLES IN THE RIVER BANK.

...I'VE BEEN RUNNING INTO YOU A LOT LATELY, OLD WOMAN.

WE SAW EACH OTHER JUST TEN YEARS AGO.

OH YES... HO HO HO HO

ARE YOU SENILE, OLD HAG?

HM? IS THAT SO?

THAT WASN'T ENOUGH TO BE CALLED A 'FUSS.'

HM? OH,

I SAW THAT FUSS EARLIER.

I WAS ONLY TAKING THEM BACK FROM THE SHARPENER'S BEFORE BURYING THEM.

THAT POLICEMAN IS TOO NOISY...

ALL THE SAME, THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY.

NAH.

YOU'RE STILL WEARING SWORDS?

'THESE THINGS ARE PACKED FULL OF REGRET, SO DON'T GO SWINGING THEM AROUND'...

WELL, MAYBE SOMEDAY

THERE WILL BE A TIME WHEN THESE ARE NEEDED AGAIN, AND SOMEBODY WILL DIG THEM UP... WHEN THAT TIME COMES, TELL THEM

I'VE BEEN TAKING SOME TIME OFF AND WANDERING AIMLESSLY ALL OVER JAPAN.

NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR...

IT'S BEEN NEARLY EIGHTY YEARS SINCE THE SHOGUNATE FELL. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

I THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL ABOUT ONE ON ONE, BUT FOUR OF THEM SURROUNDED ME AND I HAD A HARD TIME.

OH... A GROUP LIKE THE ITTO-RYU PICKED A FIGHT WITH ME IN KYOTO...

I GOT STUCK STUDYING MENCIUS.

WHEN I THOUGHT I'D FINALLY MADE IT HOME AFTER TWELVE YEARS, I WAS THROWN INTO HAGI PRISON.

WHEN I WAS FISHING IN TOSA, I WAS SHIPWRECKED AND RESCUED BY A SHIP FROM AMERICA...

...FUUUH...

PON

...'ITTO-RYU,' HUH? THAT NAME HASN'T PASSED MY LIPS IN NINETY YEARS.

I WAS ASKED TO DO SOMETHING BY SOMEONE IN THAT 'ITTO-RYU'... ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURE WHAT IT WAS ANYMORE...

I'VE GOT A FEELING THAT...

THAT'S RIGHT... I'VE REMEMBERED. IT WAS THE 'ITTO-RYU'.

THAT'S THE KIND OF AGE THIS IS.

THEIR SWORDS AND STIPENDS... HAVE ALL BEEN SNATCHED AWAY, AND THEY'VE BEEN REDUCED TO THE SAME STATUS AS COMMONERS.

THE SAMURAI ARE ALL GONE. REPLACED BY THE SHIZOKU, THEIR DESCENDANTS.

IF HE SAW THIS ERA.

I WONDER HOW THAT BASTARD WOULD FEEL...

THAT MAN... I CAN'T REMEMBER HIS NAME OR FACE ANYMORE...

....SO?

WHAT IS IT, OLD HAG? YOU WOULDN'T HAVE COME TO SEE ME TODAY IF YOU DIDN'T WANT SOMETHING...

HM? OH...

I CERTAINLY DO HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH YOU.

IF WE DON'T CUT OFF OUR TALK TO MAKE AN OPPORTUNITY... IT WILL BE TROUBLESOME.

THE OWNER OF THE 'BUSINESS' OUGHT TO COME CLOSER.

HEY, COME OVER HERE.

...WHO?

THIS IS THE GRAND DAUGHTER OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS... SHE'S CALLED FUYU.

BUT HE TRIED TO KIDNAP HIS ELDER BROTHER'S DAUGHTER TO FORCE HIS POINT.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FINE IF HE HAD JUST TALKED,

THE YOUNGER BROTHER CLAIMED THAT THE SWORD PROHIBITION WOULD RUIN THE DOJO, SO THEY SHOULD CLOSE IT AND START SOMETHING NEW...

THIS ACQUAINTANCE SET UP A SWORD DOJO IN HONJO,

BUT THEIR TWO SONS... THIS GIRL'S FATHER AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER HAD QUITE A QUARREL OVER THE SUCCESSION.

HUH!?

YOU'RE GOING TO PROTECT THE GIRL FOR ME FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

DON'T YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE ROUGH ON A LITTLE KID?

I'M LIVING ON AIR FROM DAY TO DAY.

YOU WANT ME TO BE A BODYGUARD AND A MEDIATOR, OLD HAG...?

WHY'D YOU COME TO ME...?

I CAN'T HELP HER, SO DON'T SHOVE THIS OFF ON ME!

I DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT MYSELF!

....HERE...

FIRST OF ALL... HUH?

WHAT'S THIS?

?

...DID YOU CARVE THIS?

...MY MOTHER... ASKED ME TO CARRY IT...

SHE GOT IT FROM HER OWN GRANDMOTHER...

GRAND--MOTHER...

MOTHER SAID... IT WAS GIVEN TO HER BY MY GRANDMOTHER...

IS YOUR MOTHER SOMEONE I KNOW?

.....

...IT'S QUITE OLD.

I WAS TOLD THAT IF I MET THE PERSON IN THIS PICTURE... I SHOULD GIVE IT TO HIM.

HEY... OLD HAG,

DON'T JUST DECIDE THINGS ON YOUR OWN...!

HOW ABOUT IT, FUYU?

WILL YOU GO WITH THIS MAN?

...TCH.

AAAGH!

AAAGH! RIGHT WHEN I'D FINALLY MADE IT BACK TO EDO AND WAS GOING TO TAKE A CUSHY WHITE COLLAR JOB...

HO HO... YOU SAY THAT, BUT YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN IT.

WELL, FOR NOW IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU LEAVE EDO TODAY OR TOMORROW... I'M COUNTING ON YOU, MANJI.

IT WILL PROBABLY BE A LOT HARDER THAN CUTTING DOWN A THOUSAND VILLAINS.

IN AN ERA WHEN YOU CAN'T SWING A SWORD,

YOU'LL HAVE TO PROTECT THAT CHILD WITH YOUR BODY ALONE, AND KEEP PROTECTING HER TO THE END.

KAH

OH.

"UNZ."

...WHAT IS IT?

.....

HERE.

.....

ARE YOU OKAY? ...DON'T CRY.

OH...
THIS IS...

YOUR LITTLE FINGER...

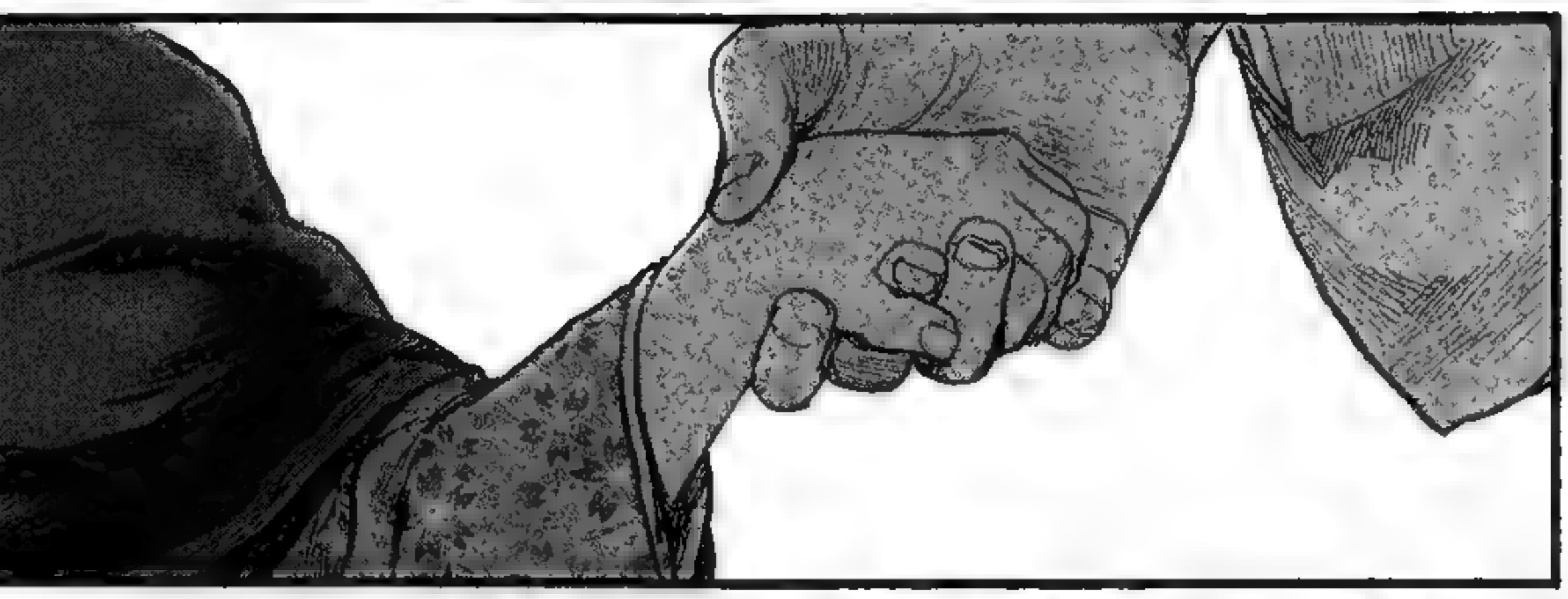
KEH...! HA HA HA HA HA HAH...

BUH....?

.....HEH

IT'S NOTHING.

THANKS TO YOU, I FINALLY MANAGED TO REMEMBER HIS NAME.



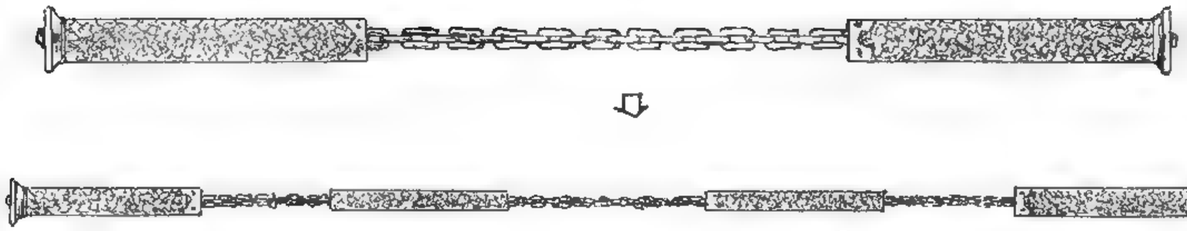
I SEE...
IT'S A LONG WAY TO WHERE WE'RE GOING, AFTER ALL.

WANT TO RIDE THE HORSE TRAM?

...OKAY.

無限の住人 完

- APPENDIX -



DOMA

▲ AONAGI (UPPER), TINNAGI (LOWER)

TINNAGI IS LIKE AN AWAKENED AONAGI, AND MIGHT BE CALLED
ITS TRUE FORM. ITS REACH EXTENDS, BUT BECAUSE
THE SPACE BETWEEN THE SEGMENTS IS EMPTY, ITS STRIKING POWER DECREASES...
THE MAN WHO COMMUNICATED THE ALLURE OF NUNCHUCKS TO THE WORLD,
BRUCE LEE HIMSELF, CRITICIZED NUNCHUCKS, SAYING THAT
'THEY'RE NICE TO LOOK AT, BUT NOT A PRACTICAL WEAPON.'

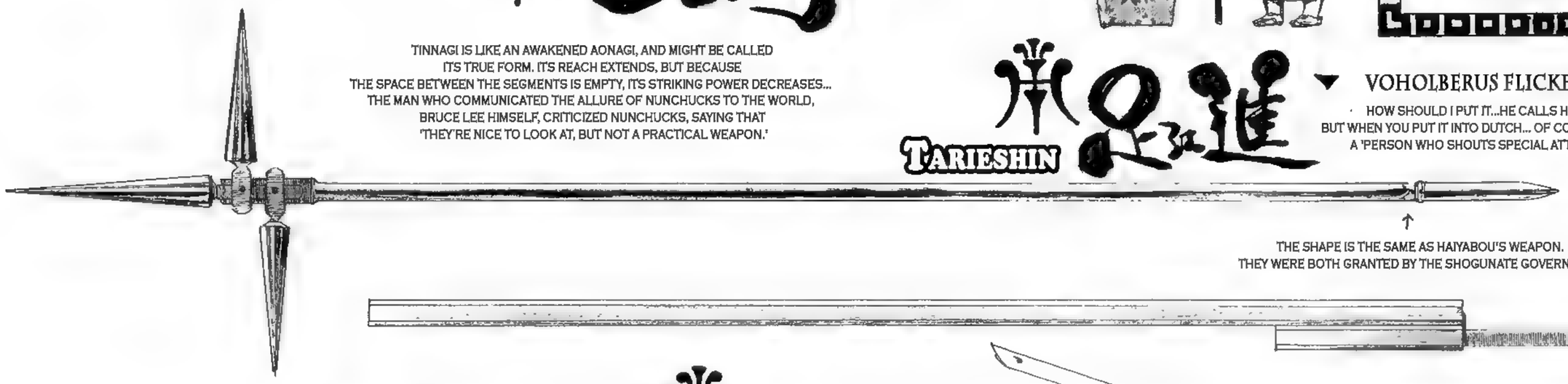
MAKIHIGASHI SPECIAL DESIGN:
24 HOUR SPECIALTY WEAPON SHOP
~DRIPPING WITH YOUTH~

巻末特別企画
武器屋24時間
～ポロリ青春～

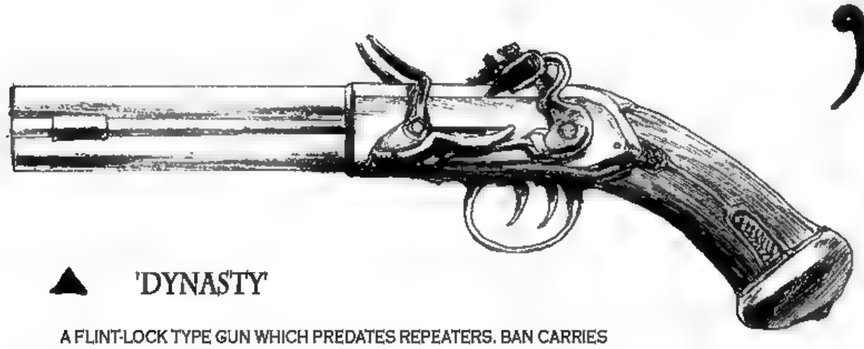
TARIESHIN

▼ VOHOLBERUS FLICKER

HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...HE CALLS HIS OWN WEAPON 'SCARECROW,'
BUT WHEN YOU PUT IT INTO DUTCH... OF COURSE, HE'S COLD AND CONSEQUENTLY
A 'PERSON WHO SHOUTS SPECIAL ATTACKS' IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC.



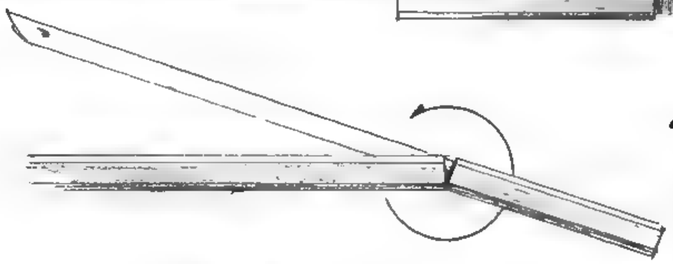
THE SHAPE IS THE SAME AS HAIYABOU'S WEAPON.
THEY WERE BOTH GRANTED BY THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT.



BAN

▲ 'DYNASTY'

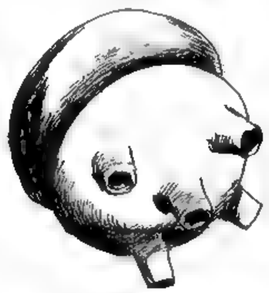
A FLINT-LOCK TYPE GUN WHICH PREDATES REPEATERS. BAN CARRIES
ONE OF THESE GUNS, AND KEEPS TEN MORE UNDERNEATH HIS COAT
(OF COURSE, HE GOT THEM FROM THE SHOGUNATE).
IF HE USES ALL OF THEM, HE CAN FIRE MANY TIMES WITHOUT RELOADING,
BUT HE'S IN TROUBLE AFTER THAT.



▲ EVIL CANE: UKANRO

'RAIN NECTAR'

MURASAKI



◀ EVIL BALL: MURASAKI UNI

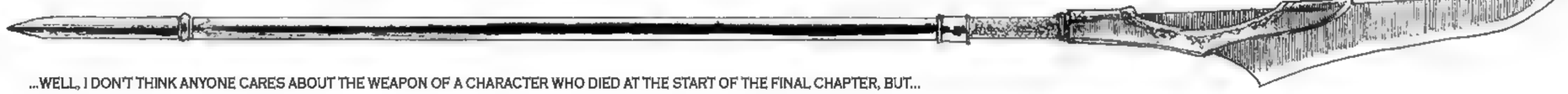
THE SIX DEMONS' TORTURE EXPERT, MURASAKI SHOUZOU.
HE ALSO USES ACID TO FIGHT. SCARY, HUH?
IF YOU ASK ME WHAT'S REALLY SCARY, IT'S HIS SELF CONTROL.
I'M SURE HE MUST HAVE SCRATCHED HIS CHEST WHILE STILL HOLDING
THE 'MURASAKI UNI' AND BADLY BURNED HIMSELF A FEW TIMES.
HE MUST HAVE THE SCARS NOW.
HE'S DEAD, THOUGH.

HAIYABOU

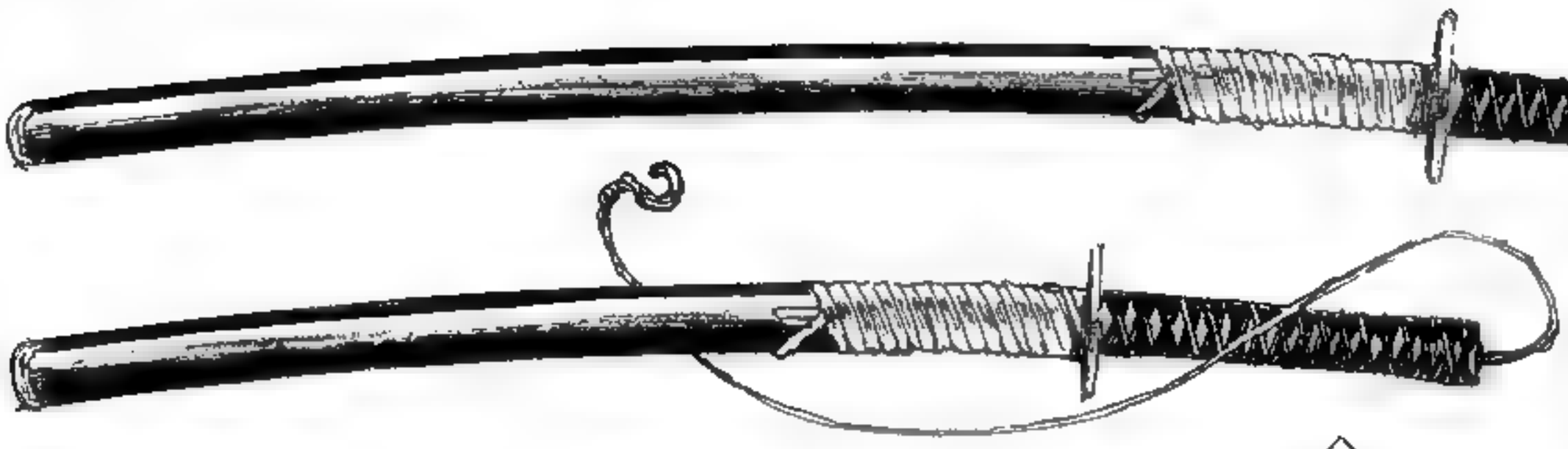
▼ HATOTSUKA NO YARI

'TWENTY FIST SPEAR'

IT'S CALLED A 'HALBERD' IN THE SERIES, BUT NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT ISN'T ONE.

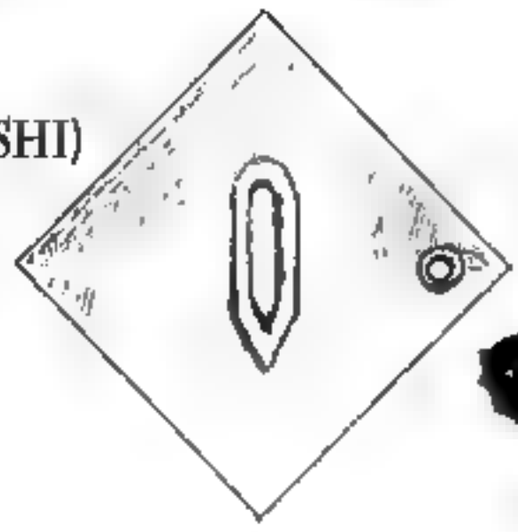


...WELL, I DON'T THINK ANYONE CARES ABOUT THE WEAPON OF A CHARACTER WHO DIED AT THE START OF THE FINAL CHAPTER, BUT...



▲ TAROUBOU (KATANA) SOUJOUBOU (WAKIZASHI)

THE LINE EXTENDING FROM THE HILT OF THE WAKIZASHI CAN HOOK ONTO THE GUARD OF THE KATANA, ALLOWING IT TO BE USED TO SCALE WALLS. THE LARGE AND SMALL SWORDS EACH HAVE THEIR OWN NAME.



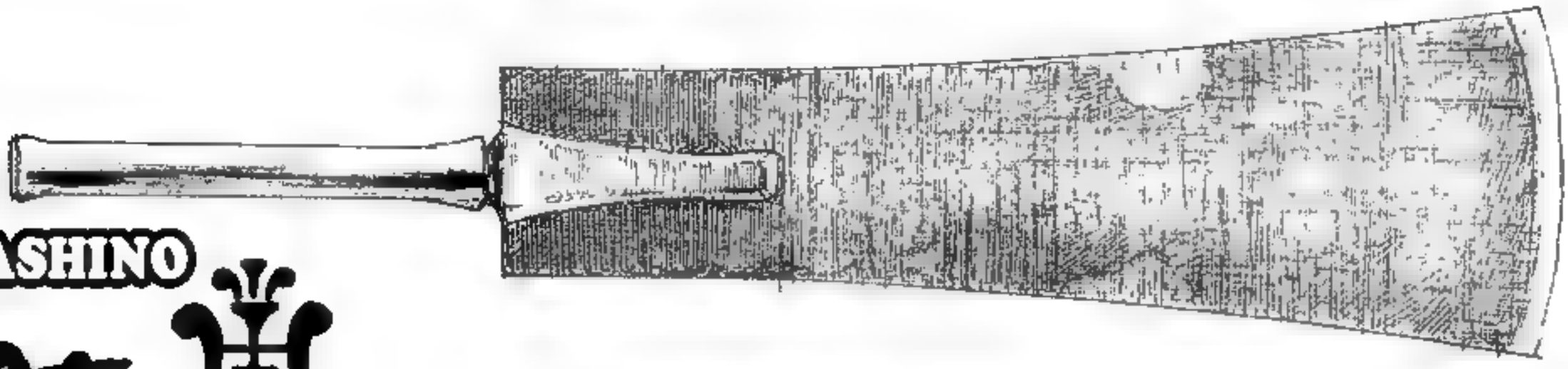
RYOU

▼ FUTATSU KUMATOU

'TWO REVERENT BLADES'

MITAKE

SHURIKEN WHICH RETURN TO THE THROWER. BASICALLY, THEY'RE SMALL BOOMERANGS. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS MITAKE HASN'T MASTERED THE TECHNIQUE OF CATCHING THEM WHEN THEY COME BACK. I WONDER HOW THE SUICIDE SCENE WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT IF HE'D COMMITTED SEPPUKU WITH THESE.



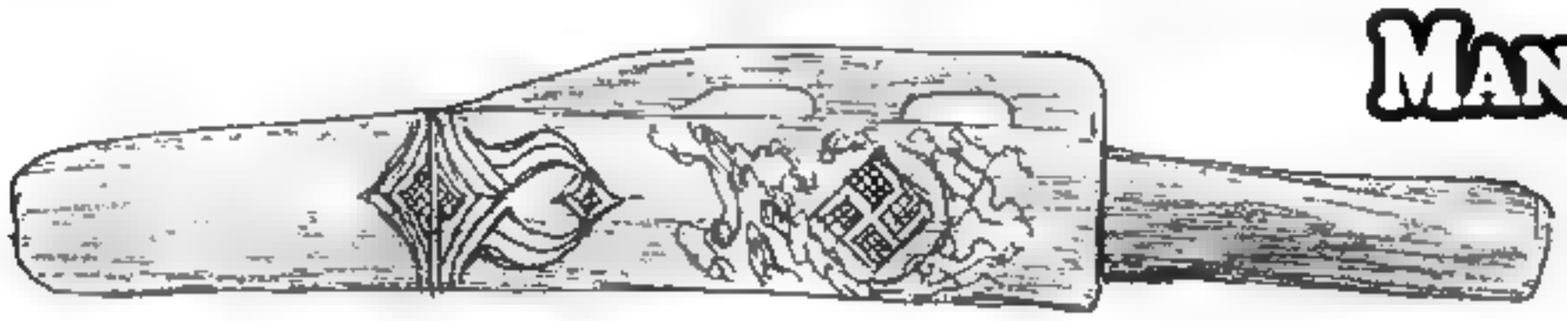
ARASHINO

▲ WASBORD

A LARGE IRON SLAB WEIGHING NEARLY 30 KG. A NORMAL PERSON COULD NEVER FIGHT WITH THIS, BUT IF ONE IS ABLE TO WIELD IT, ITS POWER IS UNFATHOMABLE. THE AUTHOR SOMETIMES OVERESTIMATES SAILORS AND SHIPWRIGHTS.

▼ UNEKARA-KANNASUI

A SMALL SWORD NAMED 'REUNION'.



MANJI

IT WAS IN JUNE OF 1993 THAT MY DEBUT WORK, 'BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL,' WAS PUBLISHED IN AFTERNOON.
THE FIRST SERIALIZED CHAPTER WAS IN DECEMBER OF THAT SAME YEAR,
AND THE FINAL CHAPTER WAS PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 2012.
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE BEEN DRAWING THIS COMIC
FOR NINETEEN AND A HALF YEARS!

I'M NOT FOND OF PERIOD DRAMA BY ANY MEANS. MY LEAST FAVORITE SUBJECT IN HIGH SCHOOL
WAS JAPANESE HISTORY, AND WORLD HISTORY WAS MY SECOND MOST HATED.

DURING MY TIME AT UNIVERSITY, I SAW MR. SHIMURA TATSUMI'S DRAWING OF TANGE SAZEN
IN A COLLECTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PRE-WAR SHOWA ERA NOVELS THAT
I'D BOUGHT AT A SECONDHAND BOOKSTORE, AND THOUGHT IT WAS COOL, SO...
THAT WAS THE SORT OF REASON I HAD.
I'VE SAID THIS MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT MANJI'S DESIGN IS A RIP-O... HOMAGE TO TANGE SAZEN.
BY THE WAY, I'VE NEVER READ A SINGLE TANGE SAZEN NOVEL.
I DON'T LIKE PERIOD DRAMA, AFTER ALL.

BUT THE MORE I LEARN ABOUT THE EDO PERIOD, THE MORE I THINK 'IT SOUNDS LIKE A NICE ERA!'

TO MY FIRST SUPERVISOR (AND CURRENT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF YOUNG MAGAZINE) Y,
WHO READ A MANGA CLUB BULLETIN AND SAID TO ME 'WHAT IF YOU DREW A PERIOD DRAMA?',
TO MY COPY EDITOR O-KAWA, WHO INITIALLY ADVISED ME ON THE SWORD-FIGHTING SCENES,
TO MY SUCCEEDING SUPERVISORS, I-UE, N-TANI, O-KAWAUCHI, M-SHITA, AND I-MURA,
TO PROFESSOR HONGOU KAZUTO OF THE THE TOKYO UNIVERSITY HISTORIOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE,
WHO INJECTED THIS HALF-BAKED COMIC WITH A LITTLE PERIOD ACCURACY,
TO ALL THE BUSINESSES AND BOOKSTORES THAT SOLD THE COLLECTED VOLUMES,
AND TO ALL THE READERS WHO HAVE STUCK WITH ME FOR SUCH A LONG TIME,
I NOW OFFER MY SINCERE THANKS...
I WANTED TO WRITE SOMETHING AFTERWORD-ISH LIKE THAT, BUT WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT IT,
I REALIZED THAT THEY'RE PEOPLE WHO WILL CONTINUE TO STICK WITH ME FROM NOW ON,
SO THERE'S NO NEED TO STAND ON CEREMONY.

JUST TO THE READERS WHO SAY 'I READ BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL, BUT I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR OTHER COMICS,'
I WILL SAY 'I SEE... BUT THANKS ANYWAY.'

WELL THEN, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN SOMEWHERE.

HIROAKI SAMURA

戦うから美しいのか!?

美しいから戦うのか!?

ARE YOU BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE YOU FIGHT!? OR DO YOU FIGHT BECAUSE YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL!?

沙村広明、最新作!

HIROAKI SAMURA'S LATEST WORK!

女!血ヘド!!

WOMEN! BLOOD! DANGEROUS WOMEN!!

SURROUNDING THE 'GOLD OF LIFE' IS A CONFUSION OF PASSION, VIOLENCE, SEX, AND-- RESURRECTION!!
HIROAKI SAMURA PRESENTS A DISPLAY OF IMMORAL AND CORRUPT ENTERTAINMENT,
NOW IN A LONG-AWAITED COLLECTED VOLUME! WITH THIS, THE THIRST LEFT BY THE
CONCLUSION OF 'BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL'...
WILL BE QUENCHED!!

REBELLIOUS ZUBEKOU ACTION!!

ベアゲルタ

BAEGERUTA 第1巻

絶賛NOW ON SALE TO RAVE REVIEWS!

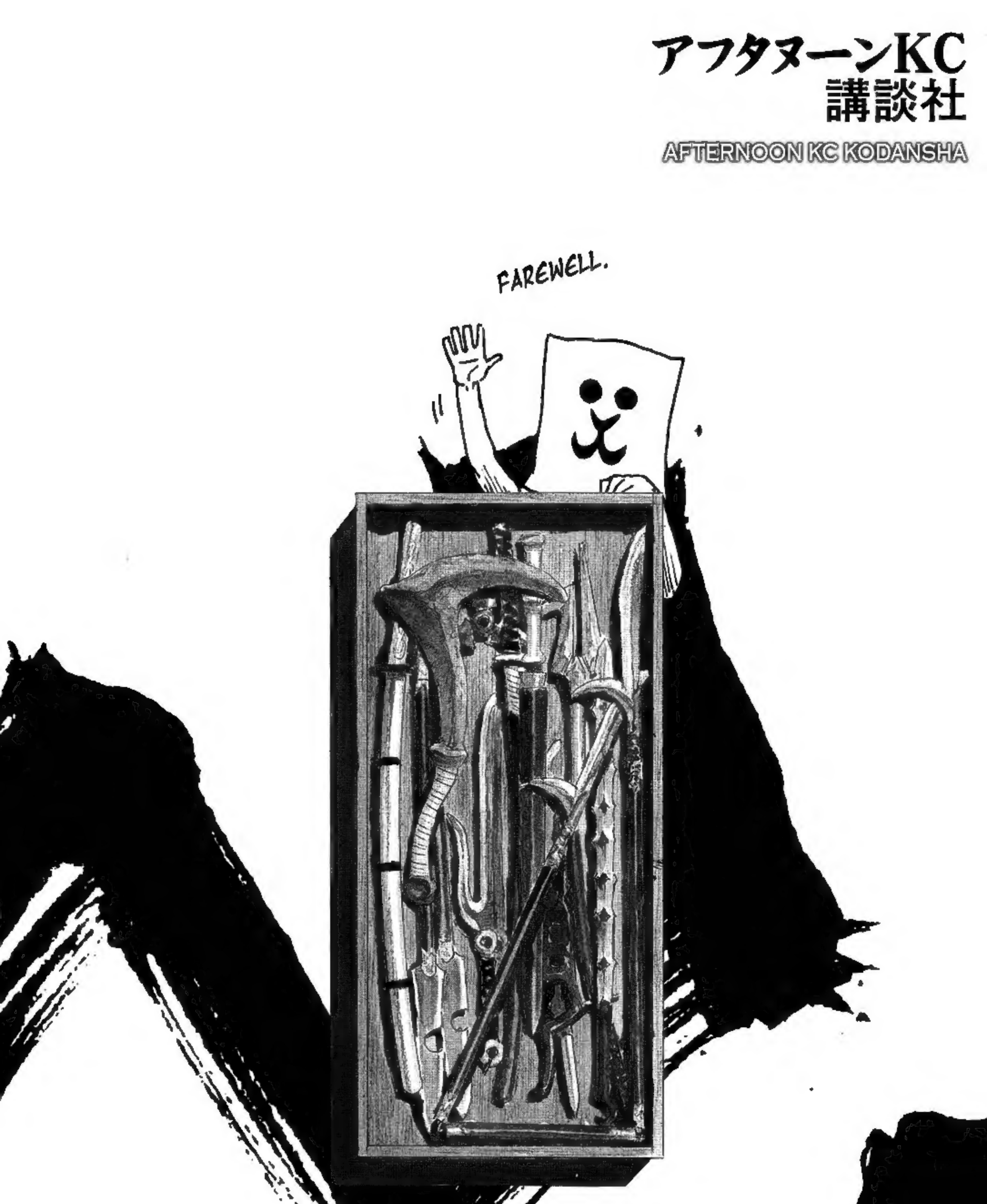
SERIALIZED IN 'NEMESIS', A SUPPLEMENT TO SHOUNEN SIRIUS!

強い女!悪い女!!

STRONG WOMEN! BAD WOMEN!

ALL IN SUPERB STYLE!
HIROAKI SAMURA'S COLLECTED WORKS,
NOW ON SALE!

[HALCYON LUNCH] VOLUME 2
BEAUTIFUL EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL GIRLS
THAT EAT AND DRIVE ANYTHING!
THEY'LL GOBBLE UP ANYTHING,
FROM CARS TO HUMAN BEINGS!

HAPPY
SCANS

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